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"Which head is mine?" the Mad Hatter asked in a perplexed tone, scratching the snowman's head by mistake. "I get so confused," he went on, "what with my hat being on the snowman's head, and the Guinness head not having a hat."

"Oh, but you can always tell the head of a Guinness,"



(With acknowledgements to Macmillan & Co. Ltd.)

cried Alice. "See how rich and creamy it is — look at its smoothness and closeness."

"Wonderful," exclaimed the Hatter, "it reminds me of . . . it's something like . . . let me see . . ."

"But there's nothing like a Guinness," said Alice.

"I didn't say there was," replied the Hatter. "I said, a Guinness was something like." "Yes," he repeated, smacking his lips approvingly, "something like."

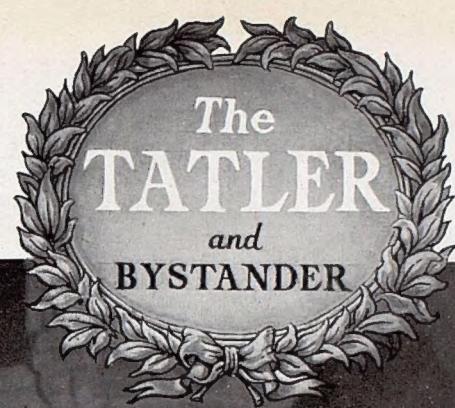
"Oh, won't you give the snowman some?" cried Alice. "He's got such a melting expression."

The Hatter shook his head. "I'm not as mad as all that," he said, as he finished the glass.



DEC
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“...Sweet Singing in the Choir”



My Christmas Story

“The house was haunted by memories of Colonial days; but more important to me—by ghosts”

• Gordon Beckles •

“... And everyone in the town knew it. Few would ever walk up our long drive at night”

WHEN the sun shone and made everything glisten it was as pretty as a Christmas card, but I liked the grey sky best, when the woods around the house were full of shadows and more snow seemed about to fall and all around was a feeling of mystery.

That was the sort of day it was when I went out to cut a Christmas tree for the first time. So cold that you could not touch the blade of the axe for fear of blistering your fingers. The best trees were beyond the orchard on a slope above the field where in spring wild columbine grew. But I had had my eye on a particular tree by the Piper's Pool (“which had no bottom to it”) and trailea my sled down that way. It was one of those trees that seemed designed by nature for Christmas, its branches symmetrical and sturdy enough to bear the weight

of candles, decorations and presents. Chopping it down was quite easy. I was handy with the axe. The tree came down with a swish on to the frozen crust of snow.

So far I was quite satisfied with myself, but when I tried to lug the tree on to my sled I saw that I should never be able to get it back to the house that way, not even with two sleds. Still, I thought, I had cut it down, which was something. While I was fretting about the next move I heard sleighbells coming up the drive. It was one of the tradesmen from the town, the grocer I think. He had had his sleigh newly painted that winter. Getting out the sleighs from the stables was one of the first signs of coming winter in our town. They usually started off the season with a nice coat of paint.

You could see the town from the front windows of our house, and on the grey days that I felt to be so mysterious it was lovely to watch the lights go on.

Electric light was still something of a novelty. If, on such a day, you had suddenly said “Electric lights!” the picture in my mind would have been of those at pantomime time in the shop windows of the Strand between Charing Cross Station and Drury Lane Theatre, which was a long, long way away. The map said “Halifax to Liverpool 2410 miles,” and we were forty miles farther on.

Our town was not—of course—like other Canadian towns.

We had nothing to do with prairies or cowboys or the wheatfields of the “golden West” which looked so vivid on the C.P.R. ➤

My Christmas Story—contd.

posters. We left that to the hordes of immigrants who passed by, mostly during the spring months, in packed trains, wearing the clothes of all Middle Europe. We were very proud of belonging to a superior part of Canada altogether, even though there were people in England who got Nova Scotia confused with Nova Zembla.

We may have been remote, you might not be able to find us on the big maps showing the cities, but we were a wonderfully self-contained town. Although our population was less than four thousand we had a drowsy university that boasted an eighteenth-century Royal Charter and sometimes almost a hundred students. On Sundays you could have your choice of five different services; Presbyterian, Church of England, Methodist, Baptist and Roman Catholic, to say nothing of the Salvation Army and King's College Chapel. Our river had a tidal bore from the Bay of Fundy that raced in "as fast as a horse could gallop," or almost. And a few miles away you could go shooting bears and there were moose up by the lakes on the way to the lumber camps.

On those grey days which so kindled the imagination you often had the feeling—or, at least, I did—that the world really revolved with our town as the axis.

THE house stood on a slight hill at the end of a drive and had been built in the days when Canada was still a colony.

It was an imposing place, built of rough-hewn stone nearly a foot thick, but sheathed in white shingles. There were parts of it inside that seemed to have been left over when the architect's imagination had exhausted itself. No other explanation for the odd corners and windows flush with the floor.

In the library had been born, in the brain of the original owner of the house, the first humorous character in North American fiction—"Sam Slick" the Yankee pedlar and forerunner of countless hundreds of other wisecracking characters. I am not sure but that it may have been Sam Slick who invented the wisecrack when he made his début some time in the 1830s. His creator was Thomas Chandler Haliburton, who was chief justice of common pleas in Nova Scotia and ended his life as a Member of Parliament for Launceston. The son of the house became a peer and a Foreign Secretary in the eighties. The house was haunted with memories of colonial days, of United Empire Loyalists who crossed the border after the American Revolution to remain under the Union Jack, of the gentry and retired officers who settled in the province after the Napoleonic wars; but more important to me, the house was haunted—by ghosts.

And everyone in the town knew it. Few would ever walk up our long drive at night.

On the left of the drive going up, and opposite a grove of immensely tall wild cherry trees, was the "Piper's Pool," and around this gloomy little pond were built some of the ghost stories. Some time in the eighteenth century, when there was a small garrison of Highlanders in the wooden blockhouse, a local beauty was believed to have lost her engagement ring while washing in the Pool. It served her right, I thought, for never was there a more unsuitable washing place. A young piper of the Highlanders dived in to

find it. He was never seen again. "The pool had no bottom to it." This seemed to me even then just a pretty fancy. I was little impressed.

I LIVED in the house and had actually "heard things." One was the odd draught of air that drifted through the house, opening and closing doors, knocking over chairs and books and even seeming to stumble on the stairs. My parents had a theory that this was connected with the turn of the freak tides, the only ones of their kind in the world. Yet even they were disturbed at times.

Then there was the "knocking."

This was no wind. Nor could it be accounted for by rats.

It was a deliberate and agitated pounding against a bolted door that led to an empty annexe built out into the orchard. Once, sitting with my parents in front of the log fire, I suddenly heard the pounding and saw my mother stiffen and bite her lip. No one said "What is that?" for I was not supposed to know of it at all. Then my mother rose and went out into the hall, unbolted the door and walked down the unlighted passage towards the annexe. I thought her incredibly brave; and think so now.

The oddity that I did not like was the opening and closing of the latched door at the top of a little staircase outside my bedroom. This led to a mysterious set of half-rooms under the roofs. We had a bolt put on this door. I will never forget the night when I awoke and heard what I believed to be the bolt being shot back.

Our dogs suffered. Sometimes of an evening one would put back its head and yowl fit to awaken the dead, and I am sure must have frightened what ghosts there were. (I have since had this experience with

a dog in the home of one of our most celebrated writers in the realm of "time theories" and Yorkshire goings-on.)

Yet we seldom suffered from these visitations at Christmas time.

It was more often in the summer, and then there would be the carriage clip-clopping up the drive to the front door, an illusion which was made all the more unearthly because it invariably happened at the time of the full moon, when everything could be plainly seen—except the carriage.

I got so used to this carriage that it never bothered me. I was quite prepared to put it down to some acoustical freak, although what a horse and pair were doing clip-clopping about anywhere near us in the early hours of the morning I could not imagine.

SUMMERS were fun in those days so long, long ago. There was much to do; walking along the railway lines, swimming in the fish-hatcheries and going up for a free and huge meal to the lumber camps on the lakes by way of the wooden aqueduct, down whose trough of water would flash convoys of heavy planks on their way to the river.

Is it an illusion that the sun shone more beautifully than it does to-day? The drowsiness of a warm summer day soothed by that most somnolent of all machines—a sawmill; going barefoot for weeks on end; the delicate aroma of ice-cream flavours in the local "candy kitchen"; and then, in the evenings,

the long and inexpressibly sad wail of the express train as it made its way through the villages farther down the river, and then the tolling of its bell as it crossed the bridge and prepared to make its way along part of our main street.

Such a life seemed heaven for one schooled alternately in England and Canada, who came from the starchiness of Eton collars and dancing pumps to such excitements as "running away with the circus"—all in one summer.

If the summers seem long enough when winter came then. We were in a different world when the snow fell and the double-windows were back in their frames, and a whole room was stacked with logs for the winter fires. What did we do in those days before broadcasting to amuse ourselves? Before the talkies? Before the newspapers filled their pages with the excitements of war? When over sixteen kings and emperors sat on the thrones of Europe and all looked so fair in the world?

WE went skating every day, and went sledding; we went to see the films at the local "nickel," where the only colours shown were as yet on the lantern slide of the King and Queen that went with the playing of the Anthem. We had dances to a piano and a fiddle. We had strange things called candy-pulls. And we sat around fires and popped corn, then dipped it in sticky molasses.

And then came Christmas and on each eve, as we gathered around the fire in the hall, a small book would be produced and the reading began.

"Marley was dead, to begin with. There is no doubt whatever about that. The register of his burial was signed by the clergyman, the clerk, the undertaker and the chief mourner. . . . Old Marley was as dead as a doornail."

I always like the first part of the *Christmas Carol* best, especially when the bell rope began to swing in Scrooge's parlour, all the house bells rang and: "the cellar door flew open with a booming sound, and then he heard the noise much louder on the floors below; then coming up the stairs; then coming straight towards his door."

As I have said, we seldom heard "things" in our house during the winter, so we liked the ghostly parts of Dickens.

We always ended as the book itself ends. "It was always said of Scrooge that he knew how to keep Christmas well, if any man alive possessed the knowledge. May that be truly said of us, and all of us! And so, as Tiny Tim observed, God bless Us, Every One!"

IT was for the hall where we read *The Christmas Carol* that I had chosen my tree. The grocer and I got it hitched to his sleigh and we dragged it up the drive to the front door.

"What is it for?" asked my mother with a smile.

"It's the Christmas tree for the hall," I said proudly.

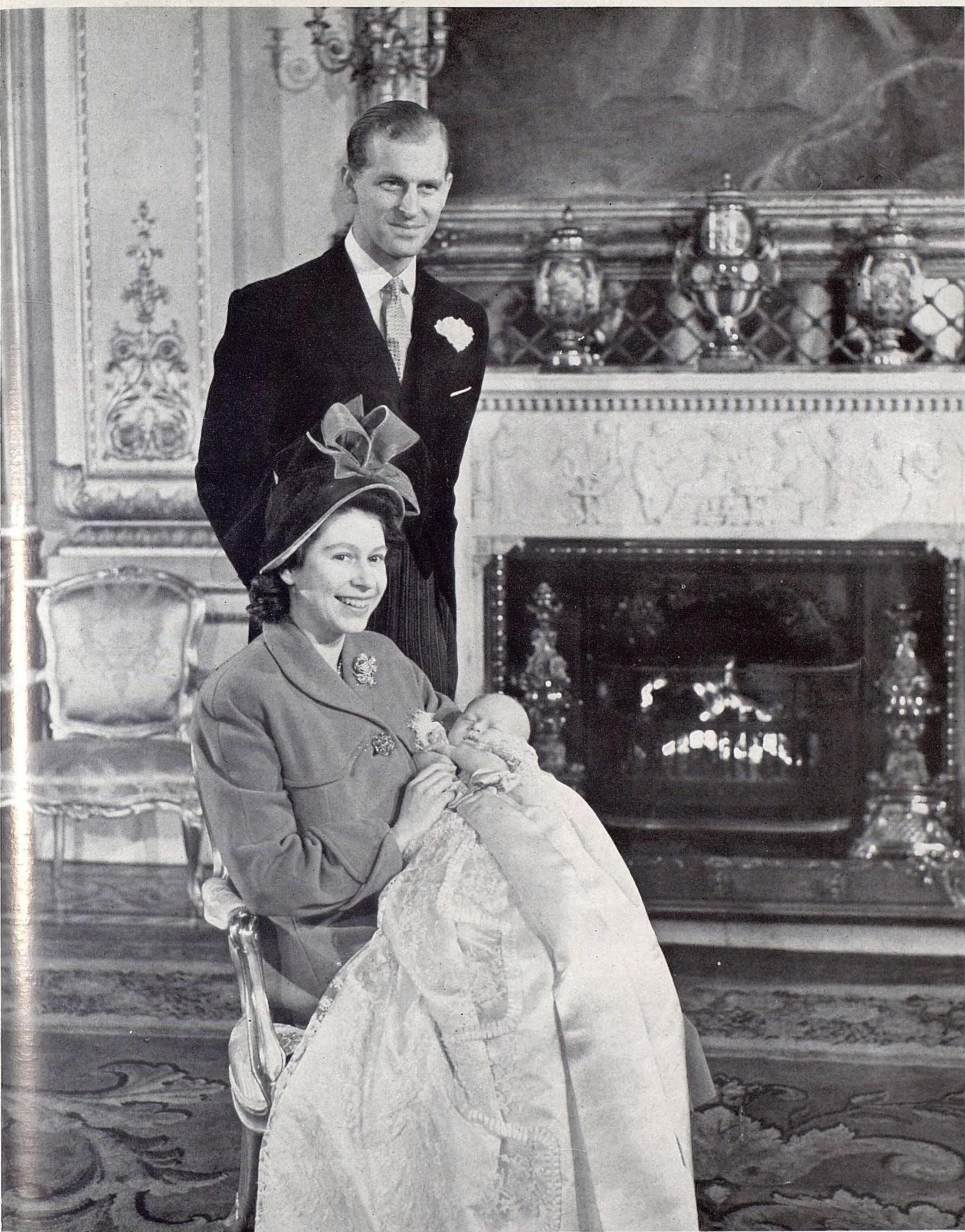
"Impossible!" she said, "It's far, far too big. It would go through the ceiling."

I measured it. The tree was eighteen feet high.

"You mustn't be too ambitious," she said.

So I went out and cut down a smaller tree, but when summer came and I saw the skeleton of my first tree lying forlorn in the sunshine I felt resentful and sad. It was a lovely Christmas tree! But all this was long, long ago in a far distant place; at least thirty-five years ago. They say you can fly there in fourteen hours now. I like to think of it as a different world.





Photograph—"THE TIMES"

PORTRAIT OF A FAMILY

Charles Philip Arthur George, first child of T.R.H. Princess Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh, was christened in the White and Gold Music Room of Buckingham Palace by the Archbishop of Canterbury. The silver lily font from Windsor Castle in which Queen Victoria's children were christened was used. The infant Prince, now second in succession to the Throne, had eight sponsors, including his great-great uncle King Haakon, formerly Prince Charles of Norway

The Greatest Clown of Them All?



Grimaldi the Laughter-Maker, as envisaged by Tom Titt through the medium of old prints. At the top, he contemplates a hempen necktie with a certain amount of indecision. Below, he is seen impersonating, with great vivacity, a "Charlie" or Bow Street runner

Drury Lane, Covent Garden, Sadler's Wells—these were the stamping-grounds of Grimaldi, darling of early nineteenth-century audiences. His most famous pantomime was *Mother Goose*, and when he died in 1837 he bequeathed a legend

• Anthony Cookman •

MANY whose sense of humour is not otherwise in doubt turn a lack-lustre eye on clowns. These people perceive and eagerly relish the delicious differences between one fool and another of their acquaintance; yet to the antics of an allowed fool they show a Malvolio-like insensibility.

Perhaps it is more difficult than once it was to fall in love at first sight with clowns. Well-meaning parents still encourage the child to expect wonders of the harlequinade which is to bring down the curtain on his first pantomime; and all that happens is the brief appearance of Clown, Columbine and the Policeman going perfunctorily through some rather mystifying and unfunny business with a red hot poker and a string of sausages.

Naturally there is disillusionment. Yet if the harlequinade is no longer what it was in this country its decline is due to the genius of a single clown.

GRIMALDI, appearing in *Mother Goose*, the pantomime of 1805, put so much individuality into the character of clown that poor Harlequin and Columbine began to lose their vogue. At the end of the century this pretty little fable—which, with a bit of classical mythology, once composed the pantomime—had dwindled into a formal flicker of traditional colour at the tail end of the proceedings.

Was Grimaldi the greatest clown of all? He was certainly acclaimed as such by those who saw him. In him, it was said, all the types of clown met. I wonder. There would seem to be fundamental differences between Grimaldi and the court jesters like Will Somers and Tarlton, whose characteristic tricks of humour are clearly reflected in the fools of Shakespeare's plays. Evidently they mixed plainness of speech with a word-teasing facetiousness, tartness with pleasantness.

The Grimaldi tradition—better preserved in the circus ring than on the stage—discards verbal quips for knockabout. "Serious falls from serious heights, innumerable kicks and incessant beatings" were Grimaldi's daily fate. But if there had been no more than slapstick in his fun, we should not have heard so much about him. "For boots he would wear a coal scuttle, for spurs, brass dishes and candlesticks"—that is the clue to his mystery.

He transformed things. He threw doubt on the finality of dull fact.

Here we are on dangerous ground. There is an exasperating cant of clownage. Enthusiasts are apt to insist that the clown is a pretentious figure, standing in some sort of symbolic relation to his age and as good for our souls as the ministrations of the kind of doctor known to the army as a trick cyclist. If he is indeed that, it would seem to be no laughing matter. But Grimaldi left audiences holding their aching sides, and his practice must somehow have squared with one or other of the many

theories of the comic—all, according to Jean Paul Richter, themselves comic.

WHAT charms us most in clowns of the Grimaldi school is, I think, their original way of dealing with inanimate things. To all of us at times the inanimate world is dull or intractable, irritating or slightly terrifying. When we try to unscrew something it sticks with malign obduracy; when at last the collar stud is forced into place it leaves a horrid smudge to mark the scene of the struggle; and when the not mechanically minded try to sharpen a razor blade they simply make matters worse—the blade knows! But in clowns things recognize their masters.

"Ever since I can remember," writes Grock, "all kinds of inanimate objects have had a way of looking at me reproachfully and whispering to me in unguarded moments: 'We've been waiting for you . . . at last you've come—take us now, and turn us into something different. To use onions for nothing but frying and making into sauce, how humdrum, how unimaginative.'" And Grock causes onions to rumble forth a strange kind of music.

It is this power of transforming the inanimate world that distinguishes the clown from the comedian. Dan Leno and Charlie Chaplin have been called great clowns, and in some phases of this art they undoubtedly are, but they chiefly confine themselves to the strictly human comedy. Dan Leno's masterful, unkempt shrew no doubt helped many men to bear up under the "curst Kates" of their own homes by showing them the funny side of these viragoes. Charlie Chaplin's comedy (though it put custard tarts to their most exciting use) was designed to encourage the average man by exhibiting a ludicrously inferior little fellow taking outrageous liberties with imposing characters and either "getting away with it" or wearing adversity with an air.

DENO and Chaplin were great clowns when they challenged certain social aspects of reality with their shrews and down-at-heel dukes, but the pure clown, the supreme clown, is he whose jokes threaten in their grand simplicity to spread over the world and to change its shape and its very nature. The comedian is a man, like ourselves; Grimaldi and Grock and their followers are fantastic beings different from all other men. At their passing unwound clocks begin to tick, onions to make unearthly music and apples to do things which surprise the market women. They are grotesque creatures, at once monstrous and affable.

The greatest clown of all? He is at different times Grimaldi, Grock, Deburau, Dominique, the brothers Marx. . . . He is an immortal idea, and his name (happily for successive generations) is legion.



WHAT'S BEHIND THE CURTAIN? Punch and Judy are great fun, but what happens when they've finished quarrelling? A young Early Victorian guest at a Christmas party takes advantage of a moment when everybody is looking the other way to make a few investigations of her own. And she expresses in her rapt absorption the vital curiosity of children everywhere which makes the Christmas present and the party surprise so satisfactory to both giver and receiver

Short Guide to Pantomimes, Circuses and Plays

BERTRAM MILLS CIRCUS (*Olympia*). The traditional annual spectacle. This year the performers include Trubka's Six Bengal Tigers, Eric Soeder and partner from Sweden in an aerial sensation, and a balancing act by Jolly of Austria

TOM ARNOLD'S CIRCUS (*Harringay Arena*) presents the Alexander Troupe which appeared at the Royal Command Performance, in their springboard act. There are bears and other animals in abundance, and all the usual frolicking with the clowns

WHERE THE RAINBOW ENDS (*Cambridge*). This charming pantomime makes a greatly welcome return to the West End after an absence of five years. It contains just the right number of wicked relatives and bloodthirsty dragons to give all a busy time

HUMPTY DUMPTY (*Casino*). A pantomime adapted from the favourite nursery rhyme, *Humpty Dumpty* stars Pat Kirkwood as the Prince of Truly Rural, Julie Andrews the child soprano, and Vic Oliver who hatches out as King Yolk of Eggville

THE LAND OF THE CHRISTMAS STOCKING (*Duke of York's*). A modern fairy story which is no stranger to success in London, and which has all the colour of the traditional pantomime

CINDERELLA (*Palladium*). A spectacular production in fifteen scenes, with a cast which includes Roma Beumont as the heroine, Evelyn Laye as principal boy, Tommy Trinder and Zoë Gail. The Skyrockets Orchestra provides the music

BABES IN THE WOOD (*Princes*). An amusing and original show featuring the egregious Monsewer Eddie Grey, who ensures the maximum of fun with his bad French and skilful juggling

TREASURE ISLAND (*Fortune*). The play of the immortal Stevenson story, with Jim Hawkins, Squire Trelawney and Long John Silver

CHARLEY'S AUNT (*His Majesty's*). Emile Littler's thirty-second Christmas production of this evergreen comedy of university life

PETER PAN (*Scala*). This year Joan Hopkins has the title part in J. M. Barrie's children's classic. She plays it with a charm which should give the most worldly a belief in Never-Never Land

THE WIZARD OF OZ (*Strand*). The Cowardly Lion and the Tin Man are back again for another season



**Being Some Extracts
from the —
FIRST BOOK
OF GOLDWYN**

"Don't quote me. Just use the initials, Sam Goldwyn."

"I'm sick of these old clichés. Let's have some new ones."

"I'll allow the remaking of *Beverley of Graustark*, provided it doesn't contain anything likely to offend a mythical kingdom."

"You and I have a problem, Mr. Selznick. You have Gregory Peck and I want him."

"I can give you my answer in two words. Im-possible."

"We've never visited the Dardanelles. But we were invited by them."

"I'm having a bust made of my wife's hands."

"Every Tom, Dick and Harry is called William."

"If Roosevelt were alive to-day he'd turn in his grave."

"Now, boys, listen slowly."

"I had a monumental idea this morning, but I didn't like it."

"It's too caustic, eh? Then to hell with the lot!"

"This picture is moving, magnificent, mediocre."

"The trouble with the film business is the dearth of bad pictures."

"I am over-paying him but he is worth it."

"I want something that starts with an earthquake and works up to a climax."

"Are those pigeons gulls? Well, gulls or boys, they're all the same to me."

"Artificial respiration? Nuts, let's have some of the real thing."

"And if you boys can think of any new ones I'll be glad to resurrect them immediately."



Hollywood, Mistletoe and Nuts'n May

• Freda Bruce Lockhart •

AFILM critic at the Christmas table is liable, I fear, to cut a Scrooge-like figure. Our normal weekly fare is so very un-Christmas. A never-ending succession of juvenile and other delinquents, of types who need no mistletoe to make them kiss mechanically, the stream of murderers, bandits, psychiatrists and their patients who populate the screen are not calculated to inspire the charitable glow proper to the season.

All the more reason, perhaps, to aim at a more benevolent view; to forget for a holiday the depravities of *Good Time Girl* (with her deceptively gay title), *Brighton Rock*, *Le Corbeau*, *Kiss of Death* and *Le Diable au Corps* or the more infuriating inanity of plain vapid films from *Noose* to *No Orchids*, with *Idol of Paris*, *The Wistful Widow* and *The Birds and the Bees* all the way down to *Green Dolphin Street*. Stop there! I propose to forget them and I am resolved, at least for the rest of this article, to do so, and to look back for happier memories of the kind most of us like to surround ourselves with at Christmas, in among the holly tucked over the picture rail and the cards on the mantelpiece.

I was grateful to the Third Programme, a little while back, for reminding me of Stella Benson's short story, "Christmas Formula." It is the one about a traveller returning from Tibet—"the only independent State left outside the jurisdiction of the United World Government"—to a brave new world (new in 1936 when the volume was first published), where there is a formula for everything. Passports are waived in favour of an official "Mother's Kiss," and a "Mother's Tear of Joy" awaits the returning traveller arriving on Christmas morning. The steward answers an innocent remark about bells, "What's a church to do with Christmas?" and to the traveller's query, "Don't you know what Christmas means?" he replies rudely, "Course I know. Christmas-the-season-a-peas-on-goodwill. Nothing about churches there, is there."

TO-DAY that *Brave New World* is all too topical. Listening anew to the Benson story, however, served to emphasize that it is those very old-world virtues we used to associate with Christmas that the cinema has on the whole so effectively eliminated. My search among last year's films for traces of the spontaneity and simplicity symbolized in our paper caps and crackers, our holly and our mistletoe, but not to be fixed by formula on celluloid, has thus acquired an unexpected zest.

When I was a child, among the old pagan pastimes which used to enliven the celebration of Christmas was a game called *Nuts'n May*.

The game consisted of one team dancing up to the other singing: "Who will you have for Nuts'n May—Nuts'n May—Nuts'n May?" and when the other side had chosen—"We'll have so-and-so for Nuts'n May, etc," the first team danced up again asking: "Who will you send to fetch him away?" To the child-mind, important prestige attached to being picked for *Nuts'n May* and it is rather in that light that I have tried to pick a dozen of last year's films for *Nuts'n May*, a film for each of the Twelve Days of Christmas which would not be too unthinkably out of keeping with the season's spirit and traditions.

TWO first choices seem inevitable. Christmas is, we know, a family occasion, and the two happiest family films this year were *I Remember Mama* and *Life With Father*. Many of our Christmas practices were imported from Germany and date from the Victorian revival. I find it impossible to recall for certain whether we saw both these Victorian families actually a-Christmasing, for it is so easy to visualize Irene Dunne presiding over either family's Christmas: singing "Holy Night"

round an authentic Norwegian Yule tree, or accompanying Father (now safely baptized) and all four boys on the piano; or cooking either family's accounts to fill their stockings.

Another family party not to be forgotten was the peasant dinner with the parish priest presiding over all the neighbours and relatives in the Italian *Four Steps from the Clouds*. That was a wedding banquet, but no matter; it had the right festive air (except for the unfortunate "bridal" pair) and the whole film was impregnated with goodwill: So in its perverse way is *Paisa*. No cheerful film this, but a Happy Christmas does not have to be Merry and who would leave out the Negro and the Neapolitan urchin, or the fasting friars?

The French peasant family in *Farrebique* was anything but merry. But the film was the most beautiful of the whole year and governed by the unchanging laws of Nature and the changing seasons which to-day we centre round Christmas.

IT wouldn't be Christmas without children, the saying goes. And I have never seen a child put so perfectly upon the screen as young Bobby Henrey in *The Fallen Idol*.

Danny Kaye I should imagine to be the perfect entertainer for a children's party with his mixture of gentleness and brilliance, his complete absence of malice; and the inferior parts of *The Secret Life of Walter Mitty*, namely the Goldwyn Girls, are only Christmas pantomime, with Boris Karloff as the Demon King.

Pantomime, old-fashioned sentiment, goodwill, fun and fairy tale: on any of these counts it is impossible to exclude *Spring in Park Lane*—although perhaps this is one film which may be suspected of being made according to formula, the Neagle-Cinderella formula.

Passages of the Swedish *Road to Heaven* were almost a living—or "moving" Christmas card. I was wondering whether it would be far-fetched to include *Hamlet*, when I turned to Laurence Whistler's "English Festivals" and found there the heading to his chapter on Christmas Day, the lines:

"Some say, that ever 'gainst the season comes
Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,
This bird of dawning singeth all night long:

No fairy takes nor witch hath power to charm
So hallowed and so gracious is the time."

Not, I believe, one of the passages omitted from the film.

L'Idiot may sound like another skeleton at the feast until the sublime innocence and charity of Dostoevsky's (and Gérard Philipe's) Prince are recalled.

The Chicago gangster world seems remote enough from Christmas, but *Call Northside 777*, with its inspiring appeal to faith in one man's innocence, is very much to the point.

FINALLY, the guest of honour must inevitably be *Monsieur Vincent*, though an embarrassing guest he might prove; for he would almost certainly sweep up the Christmas bakemeats, the turkey, plum pudding and the nuts and wine and carry them off to distribute among his poor.

What interests me about my own list of twelve Christmas Films, chosen as not too inappropriate to the season, is that allowing two extra for goodwill it would coincide exactly with my list of the ten best films of 1948. Perhaps the spontaneous sentiment and humane values I set out to look for are what the cinema needs to catch up with its technical over-development. An even more comforting thought is that perhaps recognition of this has begun to dawn. But that last thought may be only one of the things a critic would like from Father Christmas.



PROF. HOFFNUNG'S HOME MOVIES

None of your sub-standard, educational film nonsense here. The Professor's latest production is indeed several sizes larger than life, projected by X-rays and with another truly atomic number stepping on its heels. Full-blooded is perhaps the *mot juste*. Meanwhile film assessor Bruce Lockhart ascends imperturbably with the roof; not highly appreciative, one would say, of the Professor's attempt to dispose of the critic problem once and for all.



The Royal Library at Windsor Castle contains many treasures, but few more irreplaceable than its unrivalled collection of Canaletto drawings, the subject of a recent Phaidon Press book edited by Dr. K. T. Parker and published at 25s. Above is one of the illustrations, a view of the City of London from the terrace of Somerset House, with St. Paul's, then scarcely twenty years completed, dominating a skyline of Wren churches. This drawing is believed to have been made by Canaletto after his final return to Venice about 1753

Portrait of a Lady

In all the British Commonwealth there is no figure for whom respect, admiration and affection are more deeply mingled than for Queen Mary. A great and understanding Royal personage, not only human but indomitable, she is an example for our days

• Elizabeth Kenward •

HER MAJESTY QUEEN MARY, our beloved Queen-Mother, has a very special place in the hearts of the people of this country. Victoria Mary Augusta Louisa Olga Pauline Claudine Agnes is the only daughter of H.H. the late Duke of Teck and the late Duchess of Teck, and spent most of her childhood at the White Lodge, in Richmond Park, with her parents and her three younger brothers.

On July 6th, 1893, she married the late King George V. when Duke of York, and since then she has fulfilled fifty-five years of public life with dignity, kindliness and courage.

Now in her eighty-second year, Queen Mary amazes everyone with her unbounding energy. She can still walk completely round the longest exhibition, looking at every exhibit with the greatest interest. Her annual visits to the British Industries Fair are tests of endurance for all those in attendance on Her Majesty, as she still manages to spend over two hours on a non-stop tour of the stands. Queen Mary is certainly one of the fittest women of her age in the country. Her hearing is excellent and she seldom wears spectacles except for fine needlework or reading small print. Her memory, too, is wonderful, and she has the gift of rarely forgetting a face.

The Queen-Mother lives a well-regulated life in her home at Marlborough House. Her day starts with breakfast at eight-thirty a.m., and from nine-thirty a.m.

until luncheon she deals with correspondence. Her Majesty likes all letters answered on the day they are received. After lunch a visit to an exhibition, antique shop, or one of the many institutions of which she is a patron is arranged. These journeys are made in her old-fashioned Daimler, which is quickly recognised in London, and when it stops to put down its Royal passenger a crowd invariably gathers round, anxious to catch a glimpse of their Queen-Mother, who has a kind smile for everyone. Her evenings at home are spent in reading, or being read to by one of her Ladies-in-Waiting, or knitting while she listens to the radio, which she much enjoys.

HER great interest in the theatre is shown by the fact that she is generally the first member of the Royal family to see any new production. The worst weather will not stop her from venturing forth if a visit to a certain play or film has been arranged.

On Sunday she attends the morning service at St. Michael's, Chester Square. She has no specially-reserved seat, simply sitting in any available seat in the front pew.

In her dress Queen Mary has always had a style of her own, never worrying over the changing trend in fashions. Two outstanding features have been her hats and her umbrellas. For many years she has favoured the small, swathed toque instead of a hat with a brim, and she is never seen without an umbrella or parasol. These she

has made rather long—39 ins.—and covered in a range of pastel shades. Their handles are interchangeable and include some magnificent specimens, some made by the famous Russian Court jeweller Fabergé, of St. Petersburg.

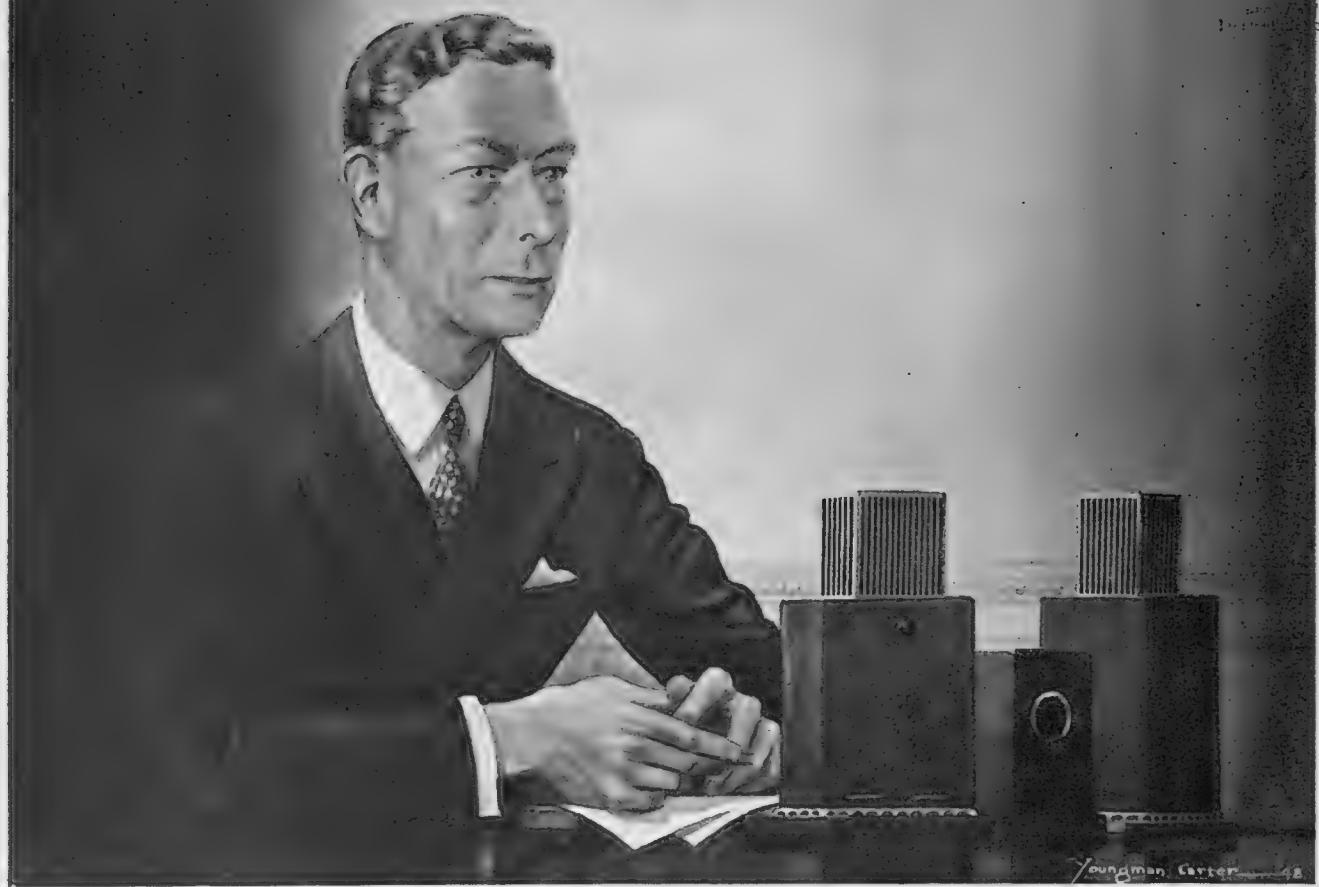
QUEEN MARY has a directness and simplicity of manner which makes her easy to talk to. She has a wonderful sense of humour and quick understanding, and the knack of putting people quickly at their ease. Her gift for languages—she speaks French, Italian and German fluently—has been a great asset when meeting foreign personages during her long life. She is one of the greatest living connoisseurs of furniture and objets d'art. In her own very fine collection she is acquainted with the origin and history of every piece.

But, above everything else in her life, Queen Mary has been a wonderful wife and mother. How truly the late King George appreciated this fact was significant in the speech he made on his succession, when he said: "I am encouraged by the knowledge that I have my dear wife, a constant helpmate in every endeavour for our people's good." Her children and grandchildren adore her. Her ideas have always moved with the times and her family seek her help and advice on all matters. Soon her new great-grandson will be climbing on "Granny Mary's" knee, confiding in her his childish troubles.



ROYAL PICTURE OF THE YEAR

Wearing the Order of the Garter, Queen Mary arrives at St. Paul's for the King and Queen's Silver Wedding service last April. She bears the burden of her eighty-two years not only with dignity but with buoyancy, and in her expression is the serene wisdom of one whose fortitude has carried her, unscathed by bitterness, through some of the most troubled passages of our history



His Majesty the King who, to the deep pleasure and great admiration of his subjects, again proposes to broadcast a Christmas message to the nation, in spite of the illness which has stricken him with such suddenness and cast a shadow over the year's end. Here the King is seen, after a painting by Youngman Carter, in characteristic attitude before the microphone

The Social Scene

This Year of Grace

One very bright shaft of sunlight has cheered and encouraged the nation this year. And slowly but certainly the social trend, for long in doubt since the war, reveals itself as a movement back to normality. Here, Jennifer runs over the main headings of this welcome resurgence

• Jennifer •

THE country's social scene now, at the year's end, falls into its correct perspective; and this is dominated by a single event—the birth of a son to Princess Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh. There is no shade of doubt that the nation, harassed by problems greater than it has ever faced, instinctively knowing itself to be at a decisive cross-roads in its history, yet took time off to turn from its labours to rejoice and be glad that its Heir-Accidental should have become the mother of a Prince, and in so doing made stronger the deep roots of a unique constitutional monarchy.

In this it was joined—genuinely joined—by millions of kinsmen. The family which makes up the Commonwealth and which knows itself to be the greatest single factor for stability in a distraught world, felt that yet another great and enduring stone had been laid to the edifice of its heritage.

The readers of this column will wish me to offer their most kind wishes to Princess Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh, with further good wishes for a long and happy life to the infant Prince: this I do, and add to them my own.

Another Royal event during the past year in which the nation was able to rejoice was the Silver Wedding of their Majesties the King and Queen. For the past twenty-five years they have set their people a fine example of happy marriage, with their love for their children and their tranquil home life. On April 26th the people of Great Britain turned out in their thousands to show their love and loyalty by cheering their King and Queen on the drive from Buckingham Palace to St. Paul's for the Silver Wedding Thanksgiving Service, and messages of affection and congratulation poured in from all parts of the world.

Later in the year I was interested to witness the wonderful reception and the continuous demonstrations of affection given to Princess Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh by the people of France during their visit to Paris. Princess Elizabeth, who for the first time was carrying out an official visit abroad, fulfilled her duties with a dignity and charm which made one justly proud of our future Queen.

DURING the past year Princess Margaret has blossomed forth to take her share in the many duties to be performed by the Royal family. At first she showed signs of nervousness when fulfilling any official engagement alone, but as the months passed she has

gained in confidence. On her recent visit to Holland, representing her parents at the enthronement of Queen Juliana, she carried out her duties with great self-assurance. In her wide circle of friends, Princess Margaret has become a very lively influence; she is gay and witty and often the centre of an informal party, keeping everyone amused with her keen sense of fun. With her interest in clothes she is already giving a lead among her contemporaries who at first were sceptical of a "teenager" bothering about her appearance, but now they watch with interest the way she does her hair, or wears her pearls, or even carries her handbag, and follow suit!

At the end of the war as after World War I, there was an unwieldy list of applications for presentations at Court, and it was decided to hold Presentation Garden Parties at Buckingham Palace to which some thousands could be invited instead of some hundreds, as for more formal Courts. For the past two years the Presentation parties have been held in the Palace Gardens. The Royal family on entering the gardens went in separate directions among their guests.

This year the parties were inside the Palace; but there were no arrangements for the majority of those being presented to make their curtsey

to their Majesties. A few were singled out for presentation, but as the congestion was far greater than in the gardens, many young girls came away from their first Presentation party never having seen the King and Queen in the crowded rooms.

ENTERTAINING on the whole this year has been on a much smaller scale, except perhaps in the diplomatic world, where there have been many big receptions at the various Embassies and Legations. This curtailment is probably the outcome of the present very high taxation, and the high cost of entertaining in hotels and restaurants. Few people to-day have sufficient food or staff to entertain on anything but a small scale in their own homes.

Another pointer in this direction has been the number of hostesses who have clubbed together to give a joint party. In some cases three or four co-operated to give a coming-out dance for their daughters. There has been the usual spate of charity balls, but here again it was far more difficult to sell tickets for these functions than in the previous two years.

In contrast to this cutting down in entertaining, weddings this year seem to have been in a much grander style. Long retinues of bridesmaids, who seem to find endless coupons for their dresses which seldom cost less than twenty-five guineas each, have appeared as in the 'twenties and early 'thirties. Wedding guests have numbered well over a thousand; at a recent wedding at St. Margaret's, Westminster, guests had to stand out in the cold during the ceremony, as the church was already full. I can think of no reason for the long retinues of bridesmaids, but perhaps the answer to the number of guests invited is really economic? On an average, comparatively little is eaten or drunk at a wedding reception, but the majority of guests will send a wedding present.

FASHIONS this year have been truly feminine, and by day nothing can be more becoming to the average woman than the much-discussed "New Look," if the whole ensemble is done without extravagance. But, alas, one has seen, all too often, exaggerated outfits, which have probably cost far more than the plainer ones, worn with outrageous accessories; the result is not pleasing to the eye. In the evening it has been much easier to be smart, as the evening dresses have been really lovely, crinolines and full skirts, which are kind to any figure, and for the young and very beautiful the strapless tops are most becoming, especially with the new shorter coiffures which give added chic.

Manners on the whole seem to have taken a turn for the better. I have found all the younger generation to be much better mannered than their elder brothers and sisters were two or three years ago.

LOOKING back on the theatre this year, one sees C. B. Cochran, that grand old man of the stage, receiving congratulations at the birthday party of his very successful musical production *Bless the Bride*. This is his 120th production in London and "Cocky," now in his seventy-seventh year, still remains the greatest showman in the country.

Noel Coward, whose pre-war plays and musicals created such a furore, has failed to give us anything new during the past year. He seems lately to have written himself out, with nothing to say to the new generation.

On the other hand, that brilliant young playwright Terence Rattigan has produced yet another outstanding success with his ever-prolific pen. His two short plays *Playbill* provide one of the best evenings in the theatre that any of us have had the pleasure of enjoying for very many years. He stands alone as the only genuinely successful young playwright to-day.

On the stage we are sadly lacking in a really glamorous actress, someone to fire the imagination of this generation as Gladys Cooper and Lily Elsie did in their heyday to our parents. Among actors it is different, as we have Ralph Richardson and Laurence Olivier, who dominate the stage and screen to-day not only with their own magnificent performances, but also with their knowledge of stage-craft, which they freely expound for the benefit of the theatre. Recently, too, Eric Portman has come to the forefront of actors in *Playbill*, after an absence of eight years from the legitimate stage, which

English turf, perhaps not so frequently as in 1947, but we have also seen victorious invaders from America, Italy and Belgium.

Henley Regatta week, which provided excellent rowing combined with good weather, showed from the crowded river banks and enclosures that it is growing in popularity as a social and sporting event. This year the standard of rowing was especially high, as many oarsmen were on their mettle, hoping that they would be chosen for the Olympic Games.

COWES still lacks much of its pre-war glory. No Victoria and Albert moored in the Roads, flying the Royal Standard. No "J" Class boats, the expensive toys of pre-war millionaire sportsmen. Such magnificent boats as the *Westward*, the *Shamrock* and her successors, which crossed the Atlantic so many times to try to win the coveted Americas Cup, may never be seen at Cowes again. The cost of their upkeep was colossal. But in their place to-day are the smaller and faster 12-metre boats which are becoming increasingly popular among yachtsmen.

The Scottish season was marred by weeks of bad weather, but birds were more plentiful than in the past two years. Several Scottish moors were let to American visitors, and many others were shot over by a syndicate, an arrangement that many owners of grouse moors will have to adhere to now that beaters are paid £1 a day and the cost of everything else connected with shooting has risen in proportion.

A PARTIAL return to pre-war pageantry was seen when the King and Queen drove in semi-state to the Palace of Westminster for the Opening of Parliament. After a lapse of ten years, peers wore their scarlet robes and peeresses were once again in evening dress with tiaras.

In the country, hunting is once again in full swing, and although there are no longer to be seen enormous and fashionable fields of, for instance, a pre-war opening meet of the Quorn at Kirby Gate, there are still plenty of enthusiasts. I have recently found among these hunting men and women a determination to use all their pertinacity and vigour to combat any legislation that may be introduced to stop foxhunting, along with other blood sports. The hunt-ball season is also now well on its way, and each week until the end of January these gay and colourful gatherings close to the rousing tune of *D'ye Ken John Peel*.

During the closing weeks of this year the people at home and throughout the Empire have learnt with sorrow and apprehension of the illness of our beloved King. With his usual courage and strong sense of duty his Majesty kept going, fulfilling his engagements, until his medical advisers had to stop him.

As I write, the King is resting as much as possible, and carrying on the affairs of State from his bed. The latest bulletin, I am glad to say, announces good progress. We all look forward once again to hearing his voice on Christmas Day, and may he make an unhindered return to good health.

TO end, I would like to wish their Majesties the King and Queen, all members of the Royal family, and my readers all over the world a very happy Christmas, and may 1949 bring them peace and happiness wherever they may be.



M. W. Elphinstone
H.R.H. Princess Elizabeth, a year ago a radiant bride, to-day the proud mother of a Prince. To her and the Duke of Edinburgh go the congratulations and earnest good wishes of all Britons here and beyond the seas upon an event so happy in its domestic aspect, and of such importance to the Succession



When it Was Wise to Be Foolish

• Sean Fielding •

*Here come I, Old Father Christmas
Christmas or not,
I hope Old Father Christmas
Will never be forgot*

*A room—make room here, gallant boys,
And give us room to rhyme,
We've come to shew activity
Upon a Christmas-time*

At this point the Lord of Misrule really got into his stride and for the next twelve days (ending on Twelfth Night) the law was his word to revellers and non-revellers alike; not, it must be added, that there were very many untouched by the Christmas spirit in seventeenth-century England. The festival was taken very seriously indeed—and so was the Lord of Misrule. This gentleman's job, and his powers, are best seen through the eyes of old Richard Evelyn (father of the great diarist, John Evelyn) in the following extract from the "articles" he drew up appointing and defining the Lord of Misrule over his estate at Wotton :

I give free leave to Owen Flood, my trumpeter, gentleman, to be Lord of Misrule of all good orders during the twelve days. And also, I give free leave to the said Owen Flood to command all and every person or persons whatsoever, as well servants as others, to be at his command whensoever he shall sound his trumpet or music, and to do him good service, as though I were present myself, at their perils. . . . I give full power and authority to his lordship to break up all locks, bolts, bars, doors and latches, and to fling up all doors out of hinges, to come at those who presume to disobey his lordship's commands. God save the King ! "

We can confidently assume that the bold Owen Flood thereupon dressed himself correctly for the part. That is to say, he would be masked and gaily decked-out in his finest clothes and carry with him his badge of office—a fool's bauble. He would have had his page with him as custom demanded. He, too, would be masked (somewhat more grotesquely) and would act as chief confederate in the jolly schemes already whizzing round in his lordship's head. Yes, indeed, it was Christmas with the lid off and not the pale shadow which currently passes as the season of celebration and goodwill towards all men.

The favourite mode for the Lord of Misrule to enter upon the duties of his office was by explaining to the assembled company that he absolved them of all their wisdom and that they were to be just wise enough to make fools of themselves. No one was to sit aside in pride or self-sufficiency to laugh at others; all must join in. Moreover, he, the Lord of Misrule, came endowed with a magic power to turn all his auditory into children, and he would, while his sovereignty lasted, take care that they acted as such.

Upon this understanding fealty was sworn to the "merry monarch" and the reign of fun and folly forthwith commenced.

It must now be stated, with regret, that many a Lord of Misrule was inclined to place a bit more emphasis upon the folly than was wholly consistent with the central idea. The age was rough and manners not as polished as our own. Frankly, there can be no doubt that scandalous abuses often followed the exuberant licence assumed by the Lord of Misrule and his satellites, and these brought forth some pretty potent protests from the Puritans, among them the sharp-tongued William Prynne, who once spent a couple of days in the pillory on account of his views. He wrote :



If we compare our Bacchanalian Christmases and New-Years with these Saturnalia and Feasts of Janus, we shall find such near affinity between them both in regard of time (they both being in the end of December and on the first of January) and in their manner of solemnizing (both of them being spent in revelling, epicurism, wantonness, idleness, dancing, drinking, stage-plays, masques and carnal pomp and jollity) that we must needs conclude the one to be the very ape or issue of the other. This . . . should cause all Christians entirely to abominate them.

HOWEVER this may have been, the University of Cambridge was accustomed to appoint a Master of Arts as Lord of Misrule. He was regularly elected to superintend the annual representation of

Latin plays by the undergraduates besides taking general charge of their games and diversions during the Christmas season, and was styled *Imperator* or *Præfector Ludorum*. Similarly, a Master of Revels was appointed at Oxford. But it seems to have been in the Inns of Court in London that the Lord of Misrule reigned with the greatest splendour, being surrounded with all the parade and ceremony of royalty.

On Twelfth Day he abdicated his sovereignty and we are informed that in the year 1635 this mock-representative of royalty expended in the exercise of his office about £2000 from his own purse, and at the conclusion of his reign was knighted by Charles I. at Whitehall. The office, indeed, seems to have been regarded among the Templars as a highly honourable one and to have been generally conferred on young gentlemen of good family.

I HAD thought for a long time to confirm the authenticity of Lords of Misrule by reference to old John Stow, the famous English historian and antiquary who died at the turn of the sixteenth century very few years after the publication of his best-known work, *Survey of London*.

Sure enough, the old fellow says :

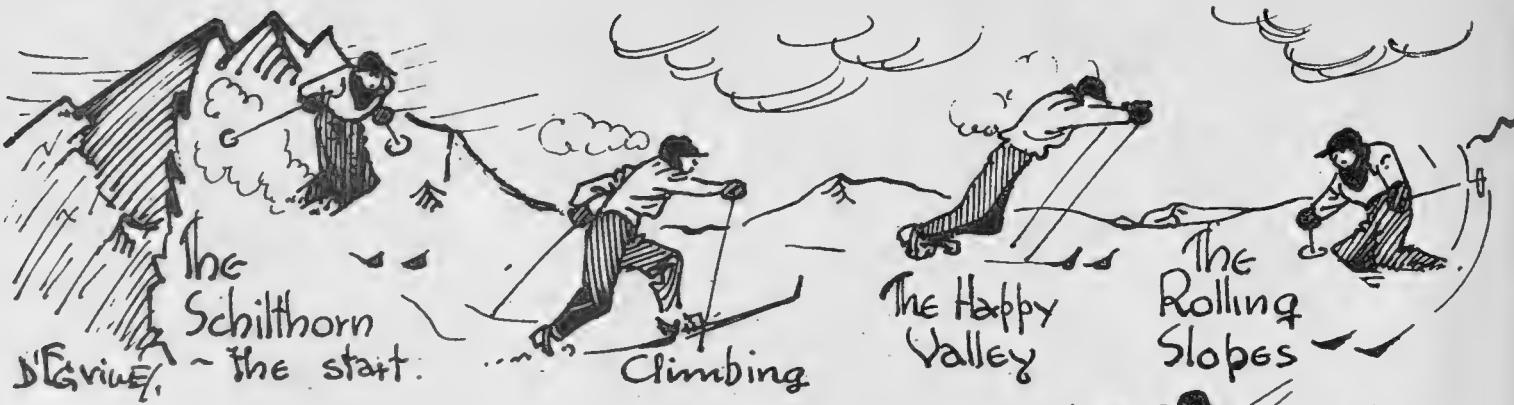
In the feast of Christmas, there was in the king's house, wheresoever he lodged, a Lord of Misrule or Master of Merry Disports, and the like had ye in the house of every nobleman of honour or good worship, were he spiritual or temporal. The Mayor of London and either of the Sheriffs, had their several Lords of Misrule, ever contending, without quarrel or offence, who should make the rarest past-time to delight the beholders. These Lords, beginning their rule at Allhallond Eve, continued the same till the morrow after the Feast of the Purification, commonly called Candlemass Day, in which space there were fine and subtle disguisings, masks and mummeries, with playing at cards for counters, nayles and points, in every house, more for past-times than for gain.

And finally, in Scotland previous to the Reformation, the monasteries used to elect a functionary of a similar character for the superintendence of the Christmas revels under the designation of The Abbot of Unreason. An ordinance for suppressing this burlesque, and like festivities, was passed by the Scottish legislature in 1555.

This last should not deter anyone who cares at this Christmas of 1948 to revive the Lord of Misrule.

THE QUEEN
OF ENGLAND

From the time she first came into public notice in 1923, as the bride of the then Duke of York, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth has been firmly entrenched in the nation's affections. With the assumption of the consort's Crown she took up the task of the Sovereign's helpmate and closest adviser with a regal and smiling sufficiency which have increased from year to year until she now not only has the country's heart, but its fullest confidence. How well the Queen becomes her high office is well expressed in this portrait by Edward Seago, R.B.A.



Inferno: 11 Miles

It was near the end of the race. Then the skis took over control and there was nothing—or almost nothing—left to do but pray . . .

• Major Alan d'Egville •

THE Inferno (or Hell-Fire, as it was originally named) is the longest downhill ski race in the world, the drop from the start on the summit of the Schilthorn, at Muerren, to the finish in the village of Lauterbrunnen being about 7500 ft. and the distance travelled over the snow about eleven miles.

But it is more than a race—it is an ordeal, and to my mind the finest all-round test of Alpine skiing, as opposed to Langlauf (long distance), in all the world.

Other great international races, such as the famous Arlberg-Kandahar, are supreme tests of pure downhill skiing. But in such races there is no flat or uphill portion, and the courses are much shorter, varying, according to weather and snow conditions, from 3000 to 5000 ft., which, of course, is no mean drop! At least, at racing speed, which will nowadays average about fifty miles an hour, with greater speeds at certain times.

The Inferno course contains every imaginable variety of ski country, with many qualities of snow. But it is towards the end that you come to the worst part of all—the descent down beside that funicular, whose steepness has been known to turn visitors back when they looked up it.

The slopes are heavily treed, and turn technique, muscle, quick decision and nerve are all needed here. It is 2000 ft. of joyous agony.

Approaching Lauterbrunnen, the trees suddenly open out, leaving the racer two or three steep terraced fields to negotiate before turning sharply left on the road that slopes down to the winning-post, beside the lower station of that fearsome funicular.

IN 1926, there were eighteen competitors, including six women, and they all finished, contrary to expectations, but not unscathed. Ribs and ankles had a bad time, and a lot of skin was missing.

To Miss Durell Sale-Barker, later a lady champion, and to myself the very worst occurred.

Starting down the funicular slopes to Lauterbrunnen, I was running second, but with little hope of overtaking the leader, Sir Harold Mitchell, who skied superbly.

Now the woodsmen who hew trees on these slopes have a natural habit of shooting the logs down to the valley, making a kind of straight, icy toboggan-run all the way.

Crossing this once in the course of my descent, it occurred to me that I might short-circuit things by getting on to it again and side-slipping—a great art—for some distance, thus avoiding all turns and taking the straightest possible line.

Alas, it was nearly fatal. For once on it and started down, I could not get off again; and began an uncontrollable descent at dreadful speed towards the roof-tops, about 1200 ft. below. I was certain I was helplessly going the whole way, to be smashed to pulp at the bottom.

I was now rolling head-over-heels and being scraped to hell on the ice. Suddenly I saw a small fir-tree ahead, just beside the chute, and grabbed it as I reached it. For a moment I paused, and then the whole thing came out by the roots, and on I went again. The next moment I felt a great heave as I hit a bump, and was flung several feet over to the right of the chute, where I lay embedded in the snow, head downhill and half-dead.

My bindings had been wrenched so that my skis were pointing backwards; I had lost my sticks; the right leg of my plus fours was ripped off, my right sleeve was in shreds, and the respective limbs were torn and bleeding profusely.

I managed to get to my feet and was about to look for my sticks, when I heard a yell, and there, hurtling down the same chute, was Miss Sale-Barker. She had followed me, thinking I knew a good way down!

I made a dive at her as she came towards me and together we travelled several yards over the snow. She had broken some ribs and was nearly out. Dazed, we handed each other our small brandy flasks. Miss Doreen Elliott, another famous lady racer, stopped in her course and came over to see if she could help us.

But, finally, each of us two crocks, armed with one of Miss Sale-Barker's sticks, which she had managed to retain, started off again. We had to get down, anyway, to get home.

Near the end, I could hardly keep standing. Arnold Lunn, his game leg badly hurt in a fall, caught me up, and calling it a day as far as we were concerned, agreed to pass the post together, if we ever got that far.

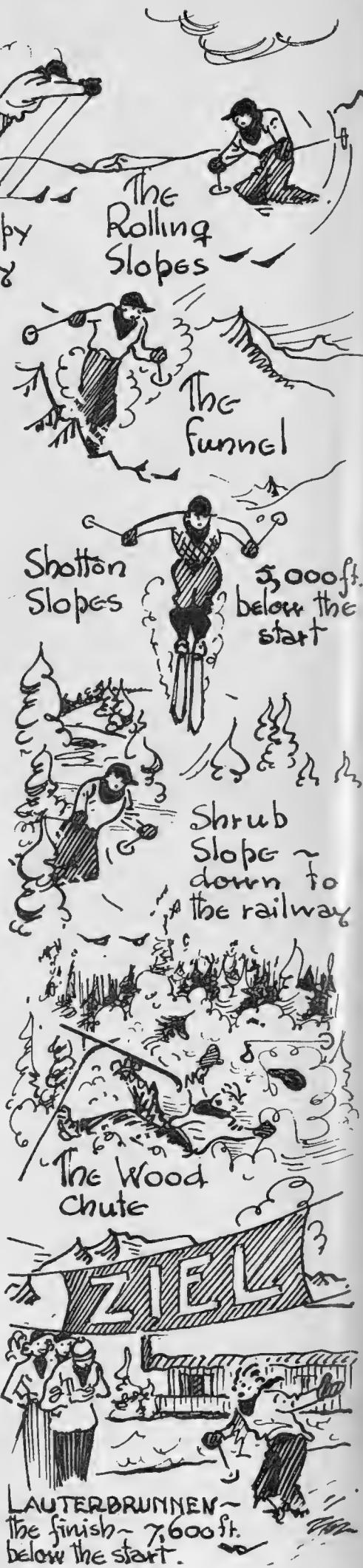
At the finish we waited to see that Miss Sale-Barker was safe, and as she staggered past the post we all linked arms and made for the rendezvous.

One by one the competitors arrived, tattered, tired and bruised, at the little Sternen Inn, where food and drink awaited us.

It was the best party I ever attended. The ordeal was over, and none of us would have missed it for the world.

It had taken the winner just over an hour. To-day, so much has skiing improved, it is done in half that time.

But the ordeal is the same!





ST. MORITZ, scene of sport and laughter, and the gay, convivial round, has other moods, unknown to those who seek their hotels at dusk and do not leave them until all is bright upon the peaks. Here, on one of the nearby slopes, lie the long shadows of dawn, cast by the conifers which seem to have such a strange, preordained affinity with the snow. And slightly blurred by the wind until it has lost its raw freshness and become a natural feature, is a ski-track. Soon the revellers will storm the peace, but while it lasts it holds in its hush the very secret of the first Christmas morning

Christmas in Paris on Your Basic

A budget is sketched for the cross-Channel traveller, with special reference to the sights where you may stand and freely stare

• Priscilla •

CHIRSTMAS in Paris! A holy rite for some, for others a pagan festival and, for the wise philosopher, a judicious blend of both.

Midnight service—*la Messe de Minuit*—at one of the big churches. The mellow, golden lights of the High Altar, the noble music of the grand organ, the seraphic chant of boys' voices soaring above the full choir, the sensuously enervating scent of the incense and the heart-lifting comfort that all who have faith must feel.

Midnight supper—*le Réveillon*—at a good night-club, the pink-shaded lamps on flower-decked tables, where roses bloom in December, the silver luminosity of indirect lighting, the crash and clatter, sobs and moans of coloured orchestras, the crooning of a Suzy Solidor or an Yves Montand and all the scents of Araby... synthetically compounded by the Rue de la Paix.

British visitors to Paris may wonder just how far their £35 will go in the city known as "Gay," where everything they can desire is obtainable—at a price: three frightening little words. But the price need not always be paid in pounds, shillings and pence. It is amazing the number of pleasures that are free, and the price of these can be put down as "taking trouble" and "being content with penny plain." The penny plain of Paris is better value than the tuppence coloured of many another city.

ALTHOUGH it is hardly possible to foretell the cost of living even a week or so in advance, visitors will find a good deal of spending in the 30,000 francs that, roughly, is what they will get for their £35.

Given the rate of exchange—officially, at time of writing, about 864—the price of a bottle of champagne in Paris breaks even with the price in London, and this applies also to the *entrecôte minute* at the Savoy or a *steak à l'Anglaise* at the Café de Paris. The big difference being that in Paris you can get the fish, the *entrée*, the bird, the sweet, the cheese and the hothouse peaches as well to accompany the main dish. It all boils down, therefore, to making one's appetite balance with one's cheque-book.

To a certain extent the scale of expenditure may be rated in accordance with the quarter of Paris in which it is made. The Opéra and Champs-Élysées district come highest, Montmartre next and Montparnasse, home of the free-and-easy, third. White shirts, bare shoulders for the first. Dark suits and afternoon frocks for the second, while any old thing will do for the Left Bank.

When, with all the trimmings that evening dress exacts in the way of transportation and tips, you have enjoyed one or two really heavy nights at Maxim's or the Club de l'Opéra, preceded by *fauteuils club* at the Folies-Bergère or the Casino de Paris, or you have combined both kinds of entertainment by going to the Lido or the Tabarin, it is rather fun to trust to luck and, weather permitting, go adventuring on foot. There are so many funny little *boutiques* in the Montparnasse and the Latin Quarter, from the Café de Versailles to the Tambourins, where it is not necessary to book a table in advance. Never listen to the touts who lie in wait and dog your footsteps round and about the pleasure haunts of the Rue Vavin or the Place Pigalle.

If you are under the painful necessity of really minding your pints and quarts, never mind sticking to the pints, and remember that every French restaurant is obliged by law to put its price-card where it can be read from outside the establishment (this may take time to find, but found it will be), and that even the richest New Poor is not above ordering one portion of fish for self and lady when they judge it advisable.

ONE of the greatest daytime pleasures of Paris is to be able to sit at the little tables on the pavements outside the famous cafés of the Champs-Élysées and watch the daily pageant. The smiling, parcel-laden people, the excited children shrilly computing what *le petit Noël* is likely to put in their shoes (not stockings, in France) during the night, pretty girls laden with ribbon-tied boughs of mistletoe, shifty-eyed pedlars with their gimcrack trinkets, and swarthy-visaged North African vendors of rugs, sequined scarves, monkey-nuts and—braces! This year, despite the strikes and general uproar, coal has been fairly easily obtained during the summer months. Cellars are full and the glass partitions that screen the tables from the cold not only keep out the insidious blast, but keep in the warmth distilled by the huge braziers that white-aproned *commis* stoke so lavishly. The cost of a hot toddy—*grog américain*—a decent cup of tea, a Pernod, or even a few cocktails, will not make a very big hole in those 30,000 francs.

On the tables one finds the *raviers* of salted chips that engender thirst: the olives, black and silver-green, that conjure up visions of the sun-baked plains of Southern France, the dish of hard-boiled eggs—but here beware! A little time ago a practical joker managed to substitute some rather tired, uncooked hen produce for the hard-boiled kind, and then, moving to another table, sat back to await results. They were odoriferous and messy for the unwary victim but mirth-making for the onlookers. Not a very pretty Christmas story, but God bless everyone all the same.

It is only of recent years that the Champs-Élysées has become the Christmas shopping centre, of which the gorgeously-dressed windows provide free entertainment to sightseers. Now cinemas—nearly all of which show British or American films—and fixed-price stores abound as well as the more stately shops which bear the famous names of Guerlain, the perfumers; Boissier, the chocolate-makers; and Maggy Rouff, the *grand couturier*, not forgetting

those plate-glass palaces where French cars are on view but not for sale—at least, not to the mere *hoi polloi*. But this beautiful tree-planted avenue has not entirely stolen the thunder of the *grands boulevards*, where the Christmas and New Year booths set up on the pavement from mid-December to the end of January show their catchpenny wares. The crowd is thickest where the Wheel of Fortune whirls and where, if one holds the winning number, one may win a fountain-pen, a tin brooch or a cardboard doll. Next in favour are the sweetmeat stalls. Pink, green, chocolate and coffee-coloured; the great hunks of *nougat* (straight from Montelimard, *Messieurs-dames*!) are mouth-watering and teeth-breaking. Like the ladies of Cranford with their oranges, you discreetly retire to your bedroom and gnaw in solitude.

Christmas trees of all sizes, their roots wrapped in straw, form a sombre background to the paler hues of the early mimosa, the forced lilac and the more sturdy chrysanthemums at the flower market in the shadow of the church of Sainte Madeleine, and it is fun and merriment to watch paterfamilias fight his way into the Métro during the rush-hours of Christmas Eve, hugging to his heart the tree which has still to be decorated.



ALL the big shops have wonderful window displays, of which the secret is jealously guarded till the last moment. One of the most charming and Christmasy sights in Paris is to see the children queueing-up to take their turn in passing along the barriers that are set up to keep the adult crowd from crushing too closely. The gay and elaborate shows that fill the windows are run by electricity. Here there is a circus complete with its sawdust ring, its clowns, performing animals, acrobats and tight-rope dancers which enchant the small sightseers; there one finds a scene representing all the gaiety of winter sports, dolls gyrate on the skating-rink or are seen skiing down the snowy slopes of a Lilliputian Super-Bagnères... The children gape, silent in their amazement, almost petrified with pleasure.

MERRY CHRISTMAS! *Réveillon* and revelry by night. Music and laughter, soft lights and dancing, good fare and wine that maketh glad the heart. Peace and goodwill... and so to bed to be awakened at dawn by childish voices, for, rich or poor, young or old, in Paris, in London, or in the ruins of Berlin, it is the children that make Christmas perfect.



IN THE BACKGROUND —THE EIFFEL TOWER

For sorely tried Paris a symbol of endurance and rebirth, the Eiffel Tower ascends behind the gardens of the Champs de Mars. And in the foreground is another assurance of France's continuing vitality, a young skier well pleased with the heavy fall of snow which enables him to follow his favourite winter sport



THE MAN WHO SAID BIG BE



AS WRONG—by H. M. Bateman

MY PRIVATE VIEW OF WYSARD

BEFORE I met Wysard, some years ago at a club we both frequented, I had one object of admiration in the art racket, namely Goya. I now have two. As artists, they rank equal in my esteem. As men, I naturally prefer Wysard, for Goya's behaviour was not above reproach; for example, he was once stabbed in a Madrid street brawl, and he narrowly missed the high jump for a crime in Rome.

As I expected from his clear-eyed and candid expression, Wysard denounced such Bohemian goings-on in no unmeasured terms. My admiration was soon increased still further. All the essential fastidiousness of the man emerged on my mentioning the famous Goya nude, *La Maja*, said to represent the thirteenth Duchess of Alba. I said I thought this portrait unpleasing.

Flushing hotly, Wysard said: "It is worse. It is *un-English*."

I said: "No doubt the Duchess was as much to blame as Goya."

Wysard said: "He should have drawn a jug instead. The outline is practically the same, I am told, and a jug would have been quite unobjectionable."

I said: "Do your people know of your uncompromising attitude towards nudes?"

Wysard said: "They know, and they are delighted."

★ ★ ★ ★

LITTLE by little the man's sterling character unfolded, like an arum lily at dawn. I have already mentioned in this page, I think, the fact that whereas the average art boy spends his leisure time reeling with howls between bawling-kent and bordello, Wysard curls up nightly at home with Vasari's *Lives of the Painters*. Another favourite book of his is Mrs. Upchuck's *Life of Landseer*. It is from Landseer that Wysard derives his well-known love of drawing stags. More than once he has expressed to me the ardent wish that he, not Landseer, had been the first to put the Monarch of the Glen across an art-crazy public; in fact there are times when he, Wysard, thinks he actually did. "My 'Monarch,'" he will say casually, nodding towards the magnificent reproduction in five colours over the sideboard, a Christmas gift from his grocer. Or in dreamy mood, "Ma wee Hielan' staggie frae ayont the braes. . . ." At such times his eyes are full of reminiscence, and he will describe the dramatic scene at length—the Monarch's maddened glare, the trampled heather, the difficulty of getting the animal to stand still or wear a hat—apparently two ghillies gave their lives for Wysard during the struggle—the furious way the great stag snorted and spat in his eye, like a rich woman sitting to an Academician, the final death-grapple. Toying with a rusty dirk marked "L.N.E.R.," Wysard will murmur "Ay, puir Sandie, puir Hamish. . ." Then the terrible dream passes and the essential Wysard reappears, gay, insouciant, modest, smiling, alert, ready to draw a landscape, a cork, or a cheque as occasion demands.

There seems little more that is possible to say, or at least to print, about the man. His technique is typical. The pencil is grasped unfalteringly in the right hand. The paper has already been spread by a menial. With unerring co-ordination of brain and muscle the pencil is applied to the paper, and the master is at work. Thus did Giotto. Five minutes later the pencil is smartly removed from the paper, and the master relaxes for an hour or two; either romping with Attlee, his pet jaguar (a present from the Aga Khan, or maybe it was Aga Cookers), or being massaged by his Swedish masseur, Nils Return. Sometimes it happens the other way round, which accounts for the bumps and scratches.

Good luck, then, in conclusion to a man and an artist whom no one, or practically no one, can help liking and admiring, and good luck also to Mrs. Fanny Blankers-Koen (Holland), winner of the 80-metre Women's Olympic Hurdles, who should have come into this before.

D. B. W. L.

Standing By . . .

TAPER for the Reputed Relics of the Magi, enshrined in Cologne Cathedral.

*Here, ringed by candle-flame and lapped in gold,
Repose three savants who leave Science cold,
(Having proclaimed a non-destructive Star):
Gaspar, and Melchior, and Balthazar.*

• D. B. Wyndham Lewis •

HALLO, revellers, this is Tiny Tim waking you from your gastric despair with the old, old wish: "Long life to the venerable firm of Chapman & Hall (Ltd.), co-architects with Charles ('Cracker') Dickens of the British Christmas!"

One might reasonably allege that the Race owes Chapman & Hall (Ltd.) even more for the British Christmas—to be carefully distinguished from the Feast of the Incarnation—than it owes Dickens himself, for it is recorded that on receiving a cheque for £500 in payment of *A Christmas Carol* (1843), in place of the £1,000 he was expecting, the master went up like a rocket. Had Chapman & Hall (Ltd.) retorted with insults and abuse, like most publishers, an explosive type like Dickens would undoubtedly have burst into a thousand pieces, thus depriving the Race of *The Cricket on the Hearth* (1845). But Chapman & Hall (Ltd.) scorned all brutality and brouhaha. As Mr. E. C. Bentley has remarked of another occasion, they swore not at all.

Their Yea was Yea,
Their Nay was Nay.

It is even doubtful if they cursed their violent protégé in private.

Fall

WHEN Prince Florizel of Bohemia was deposed in the late 1880s—see *The New Arabian Nights*—for racketing round the West End underworld, he opened a shop in Rupert Street and became the handsomest tobacconist in Soho, as we all know. But what (a restless chap has been asking a Sunday paper) became of his Master of the Horse, boon-companion, and dogsbody, Colonel Geraldine?

Calling at 198a Rupert Street last week—his Highness to-day is a trifle wheezy and bald, cagey on cigarettes but still the *grand seigneur*—we perceived a marked coolness on the subject of the Colonel, whose well-known passion for disguising himself for the night's adventures as "a person connected with the Press in reduced circumstances" proved, it seems, fatal. Though born a gentleman, the Colonel has sunk to the depths and is now in Fleet Street for good.

Prince Florizel assures us that he is too democratic nowadays to mind this very much. ("A man must live, damme!") Apparently it is Colonel Geraldine who slinks round nervously avoiding his old master, having had to put "Press Club" on his card in place of "White's," and being asked nowhere by smart women any more. Say what you like, a fellow feels it.

Frigidaire

COLD as a county cricketer's honeymoon," is the official description of last winter's icy spell, which a fumbling chap was recently striving to recall. Our own phrase, patented January 1948, by arrangement with the M.C.C.

Extreme frigidity is conveyed by this phrase, if we may say so, more graphically than by those descriptions of the Devil's embrace you find in seventeenth-century Scottish witch trials. A kiss from the Black One, for instance, did not imply frostbite, whereas women wrapped in the arms of a good slow bowler will often describe the experience in terms of that celebrated Alpine film, *The White Hell of Pitz-Palu*. "A cold so intense that it seemed to burn," is a common remark among cricketers' sweeties; likewise such reminiscences as "The day poor Pamela lost three toes honey-

mooning at Cannes." And we need hardly remind you of Gautier's famous description of an English Rose in the brothal-clinch of a Gentleman of England at Lord's:

Sphinx enterré par l'avalanche,
Et qui sous sa poitrine blanche
Cache de blancs secrets gelés. . . .

"A sphinx buried by the avalanche, hiding white frozen secrets beneath her pallid bosom." Description passed for publication by the M.C.C., barring "bosom," for which please read "bodice," or "corsage."

Noël

WASSAIL or, alas, death will have been the portion, by the time these lines are printed, of numbers of infant songsters trained by us this autumn to call on leading business men over Christmas to sing to them the Stock Exchange Carol, by our old buddy J. B. (Beachcomber) Morton, which all the City knows. Concluding verse:

(*Andante giocoso*)
High over all a Voice is heard—
"Lord Funk is buying Tin Preferred!"
Loud chants th' Angelic Syndicate,
"Sell out, sell out at 48!"
(Refrain, *ff*):
Noël! Noël! Noël! Noël! (etc.)

Deaf to the ordinary type of carol, admittedly meaningless and unprofitable to practical thinkers, business men should (we hope) be greatly moved by this one, though on the other hand they may already have mutilated or slain a few of the little ones, as Barrie did, or said he did, in 1895. Emotional citizens of all three sexes showered denunciations on the *St. James's Gazette* on reading this shy confession, so that if Barrie was merely boasting it was rather stupid of him to invite the resentment of a free and Imperial race.

Tiny new graves under the Surrey rhododendrons . . . red-faced moguls swearing dully in over-furnished drawing-rooms of appalling taste . . . riot and debauchery and heartache . . . one almost wishes one had thought of something else.

Fans

As news items go, a seasonable piece about the most northerly cinema in the world (at Ivalo, in Lapland, about 300 miles beyond the Arctic Circle) seems more pregnant with interest than most. Apparently the Lapps will travel hundreds of miles over the eternal snows to see Mr. Weissmuller going through the motions of *Tarzan*.

This would be more reasonable, a travelled chap tells us, if the Lapps did not possess greater excitements of their own, such as enchanted forests full of phantasmagoria, both weird and terrifying. Some Lapps are themselves warlocks, or claim to be.

One is therefore probably justified in describing their interest in Mr. Weissmuller's jungle antics as unhealthy. Their magistrates probably have a more severe word for it when the Lapps start swinging from trees themselves.

"I should like the Press to take note of what I am about to say. Before long many of our young girls will be unable to charm a wart off a reindeer. The present craze for Hollywood is not merely morbid but un-Lappish. I shall not impose a fine, but," etc., etc.

Exit erring Lapp, bowed at the knees, covered with shame, and snorted at by reindeer, each with four stomachs.



WYSARD'S PRIVATE VIEW OF LEWIS

Wysard here reveals his view of the whole spirit of Wyndham Lewis. His keen—nay, passionate—feeling for the dignity of *The Times* newspaper; his respectful admiration for the works of the late William Wordsworth; his idolatrous affection for Scottish music—all are clearly and reverently delineated. Also, cunningly unmasked, is a typical Wyndham Lewis MS, in that meticulous copper-plate which is such a joy to all printers and editors

Pictures in My Christmas Fire

The ranks of memory close up and the volunteers—the highlights of an adventurous life—are called forward. They come from Canada, India, the counties . . . a varied, zestful and strongly competitive throng

• Sabretache •



"Children tobogganing all over the place"

HERE'S a magic in it, however much the hard-boiled modern world may try to pretend that there is not. That this is true was once brought home to me very forcibly during the Kaiser's blood-and-mud war by a chap who, I should think, was one of the toughest of the fire-eating Rough and Toughs. He stopped one early in 1916 and was in dry-dock when he told me about it.

Like a good many others who had seen their pals hanging on the wire not quite dead, he was all agin the downing tools from one second after midnight on the 24th till one second after 12 a.m. on the 25th, and said that the High Command chaps were a packet of mugs not to see that the Hun was out to put a fast one over, and that we should find it out quick enough if we listened to his sentimental blather.

Then when the 25th was old enough for night to draw just a thin veil over the day, there came floating across No Man's Land, hardly more than a biscuit shy in some places, "*Stille Nacht! Heilige Nacht!*", of which I think the melody is almost more entrancing than the words. Things suddenly changed, so he said. It may happen that way with anybody any time, but probably most often on Christmas Day; and that is the magic that is in it.

YOU can put on a gag snaffle if you like, or even one of those inexpressibly cruel *Kanta* (thorn) Pelhams the nagsmen of the East use to mouth polo ponies. No use. Something—a song in the trees, a voice you think you hear, the scent that still clings to something—will get you, even if it be for only a split second. You might just as well use a bath sponge to mop up the water coming over the Horseshoe at Niagara as try to

stop it. The Rough and Toughs' C.O. found that out. Thomas Moore, Ireland's most graceful poet, said all that needs saying about these fragrances.

SOME Christmas pictures that have been hanging on the walls, so attractive and comfortable to live with; some just amusing and also nice to have around and about you; some not so nice and some that you can hardly bear to think of hanging at all.

A toboggan slide on Mont Royal, when I think I was about seven, is a picture with which I would not part for anything. The drift had made a first-class switchback at the bottom of it over the orchard wall, and there was a shed full of the best Canadian apples. It was a charming house, owned by people made to match, and as there were simply droves of children all over the place, and the Ancients thoroughly understood how to maintain the correct tradition, even down to Santa Claus arriving in a four-in-hand

sleigh, the picture is a pleasant one. They could not get any reindeer, or I am sure that they would have; besides, the hunters' backs had to be kept down somehow, and so they put them in the sleighs. It is almost possible to hear those silver sleigh bells.

The Montreal hounds, I have been told, have hunted in the snow and found a serving scent, but when we were there it was particularly hard, and they had to put up the shutters till the thaw. It is the oldest hunt in North America and dates back to 1826 (the country mostly grass obs: timber and stone walls, with some big ditches). I was blooded by the Master, whose name must have been Crawford!

THOSE Indian Christmases seem hardly worth worrying about now that the



P. B. Abercrombie

Scaly Fish Story: Angling in the Ithon, Mr. Christopher Inglis, of Builth Wells, caught a salmon. No ordinary salmon—it weighed 35 lbs. And no ordinary catch—it was hooked in the tail. There was a strenuous and long-drawn-out climax, for it took 90 minutes to land

whole setting has gone completely *phut*. The "Momeraths" always did their best to make things merry, and I never heard any "outgribing." Racing, chasing over fences much more sizeable than any at our Parks, and the hard breast of Mother India upon which to fall; horse shows, polo (the I.P.A. Championship usually played in Calcutta), paper-chases, hair-raising entertainments with enormous fields and wild horses; dances practically every night; in some places hunting after the scavenging Jack, and even in Calcutta when Lord Suffolk brought out that pack (mostly Bathurst hounds) and we promptly called them the Suffolk and Berkshire—but it is hardly worth while looking back on all that, so let's switch to pleasanter things, the days before the Anti's decided that everyone who went out hunting should be hanged on the nearest tree or lamp-post.

THOSE days, alas, are also very much of a memory, but what a hatful of fun we had! I "mind" one Christmas expedition, however, which was not so funny. It looked all right two days before getting into the train: then on Christmas Eve it snowed and it snowed, and it froze and it froze. The hard-riding chatelaine who was the hostess had two new ones which were fast enough to catch pigeons, jumped like bucks and were stone certainties for cutting down her most dangerous rival, a pretty lady they used to call "The Electric Hare." She was as great a flier as all that! The weather made our hostess as cross as a bagful of nails.

So on Christmas morning I thought I'd go and dig out the M.F.H., who lived up a hill not far off. He was as gay as a skylark—keen as he was on fox-hunting and he with a washball seat and hands that drove his horses plumb crazy. However, there he was with all the brightest fairies in the country (he being a most eligible bachelor), champagne cocktails, and many other appropriate things; and roaring pine-log fires in his baronial hall, and he telling everyone that the glass was falling, and that rain was a sitter inside an hour! Splendid liar! But it was the right spirit and helped to maintain that fragrance which Tom Moore knew so well, and which, even if it does give you a tight feeling in the throat, you must never let go. "You may break, you may shatter the vase if you will. But the scent of the roses will hang round it still."



THE YOUNG MASTER GOES TO THE HUNT

A children's meet, as an introduction to the thrills and mysteries of hunting, is an event of high importance to many a youngster, an occasion to be remembered with a sigh and a catch at the heart-strings in after years. Master Richard Brooks, setting off for the Essex and Suffolk meet, embodies the whole charm of an unforgettable day which is still dear to many an experienced hunting man



Happy Christmas for the Oxford XV. in the making at the inter-University match played at Twickenham. R. Green, Oxford three-quarter, is seen receiving a pass following a line-out. After a game which might with some justice be called epic, Oxford won by 14 points to 8, but it was hard going all the way. Both teams were finely aggressive, and the standard of play was exceptionally high

Scoreboard in Season

How should a sportsman spend Christmas Day? Golf is permitted, but he should eschew long walks and mixed hockey. And he should certainly abide by his own hearth, and not go junketing abroad

• R. C. Robertson-Glasgow •

I suppose the best games of all were those parcels we once used to feel for and find under the bed very early on Christmas morning. Nothing since has equalled the childhood thrill of touching that crackly brown paper. Then we knew that the immortal Postman, Santa Claus, had defeated our vigil and negotiated the chimney; and, snug in that knowledge, we turned over and slept happy.

The old games were the best, and could stand repeating; Halma, Ludo, Snakes-and-Ladders, and Blow Football. Novelties, though inspiring a letter of thanks, were privately voted a little tiresome. You had to read, and fail to understand, the Rules. England is not very good at new games, anyhow; and, so some rude fellows would say, getting worse at the old games, too. But it's Christmas; no time for satire's barb.

THAT ancient and most seasonable game, Happy Families, was very popular down our way, and, from the cards, famous likenesses were annually found, sometimes involving senior relations. For instance, Mrs. Finn, the Fishmonger's Wife, might have been the twin of Auntie —, and Mr. Bunn the Baker was awfully like Uncle B —'s brother, who did something or other rather peculiar in the City.

No one cared about winning; and at one card-game, whose name I've forgotten, where chance prevailed over skill, we used to let the same old visitor win each year; and she never knew that the pack had been arranged for her benefit. But Hide-and-

Seek was best of all; for, very soon, it was all Hide and no Seek; till, by Nature's infallible process, the elders rested by the fire, with their thoughts, and the young scattered, at the whim of exploration or romance.

IN later life, there's much to be said for a little golf on Christmas Day, if you can find someone who can bend to place your ball on a tee. Memory recalls some festival games at Somerset's Burnham-on-Sea, with Ben Travers and family; not on the principal links—the Queen of the West, if Westward Ho! be King—but on the so-called Ladies' Course. Friends would sometimes join in, with a few clubs, or, refreshment still prevailing over action, with improbable advice. Then, after an appropriate tea, to the billiard-room, with a strong tendency to "volunteer" on the Black. Between strokes, if such they were, there awaited the most absorptive of ingle seats.

If you think as I do, you will not go for a long walk on December 25th. Do you remember the twenty-mile walk that the Pickwickians and their host, Mr. Trundle, took after their Christmas dinner? Of course, it was all a dream. Not one of them could have walked twenty yards without sitting down. Nor will you play Mixed Hockey, if you are wise. No other so-called game has dashed so many proposals of marriage from the lips of man. I have seen a till then confident lover tripped from behind by a feminine stick and furrowing the fertile but liquefied glebe with the point

of his aristocratic nose. He never spoke the felicitous words; indeed, for some days he never spoke at all. Nor willingly again would I spend Christmas abroad; for, there, things are done differently, exactly when you want them done just the same.

Once, in piping youth, I spent Christmas learning to ski in Switzerland. At first, it was all very wonderful. I watched the great ski-runners, and I watched great sunsets flop down behind the Dent du Midi. "At one stride came the night"; and then we danced, and put on funny hats; but, somehow, funny hats aren't as funny in hotels as they are at home; and the girls I wished I were dancing with, they were miles away, at home; and I wasn't.

And, amidst all that sun-bronzed laughter, strap me if I didn't pine; not right away to nothing; no, no; I took to Skating and Chianti, which go so well together; and I took premature lessons in the bracket-change-bracket, and fell like a delivery of coal at the whirling feet of one who was said to be an Austrian Count, and who dressed in black tights and looked like an unexpected cross between Svengali and Dracula. The Chianti, I suppose.

NO, no, my friend; stay by your English home at Christmas; for there, as nowhere else, you will find, to borrow an idea from the immortal Calverley—

*All the best and happiest fancies
That in human hearts may play,
Start into a shape and substance
At the touch of Christmas Day.*



Mr. Emmwood's Father Christmas, and Friends

"We, my Warblers and I, would like to wish you all many delectable dabblings in the Wassail Bowl and much crafty cavorting with the wishbone this Christmastide. Although each and every one of my songsters endorse these greetings, 't was impossible, alas, to nest them all upon the snow-covered green which lies hard by the Anxious Huntsman. Yet though out of sight, their seasonable twitterings may be heard"

“But Once a Year”

“Think, as you watch the firelight through the glass, of the homeless. Sweetness, decency, peace—God gave us strength to preserve them. What we have, we hold in trust on behalf of a queered and a battered world”

• Elizabeth Bowen •



“There is something primitive about the silence of the streets”*

“BUT once a year”—and, some say, often enough. All rhyme, no reason, Christmas comes round again. Out with the silver-glass bells and the tinsel stars! We gore our thumbs on holly, risk our necks on ladders, skid on the berries pattering to the floor. Christmas-cards crowd the chimney-piece—robins and reindeer, skaters and Santa Clauses, snowy sunsets and sheep, coaches and carol-singers, yule-logs and olde-worlde inns—shy-making verses inside; red cord bows. Mr. Pickwick and all his company are back with us. Advance resistance to Christmas was so much bluff—we are for it: we let ourselves go again.

Is any heart completely closed to Christmas? If so, pity that heart. This Christmas nonsense confounds every clever saying. We grow older; the years fly round so fast; we think we know all there is to expect—yet, every time, Christmas takes us by surprise. A forgotten chime breaks out. Memories?—yes, but more. This is a Birthday, and a re-birth day: something renews itself in the world and us.

Children know the secret: they understand that life *must* overflow the bounds of the everyday. It was in the expectation of something tremendous and inordinate—their eyes remind us at this season—that they consented to be born. You tell your child, “It cannot be always Christmas”—it assents; but a look of profound unconventionality crosses its face.

Oh, it will learn sense, it will learn sense—but pray it may not lose gusto! It is wonderful how obstinate gusto is: cynicism conceals but cannot undo it. Christmas-card language repeats, every year, a truth. By the first, the Bethlehem Christmas, humanity for ever was lifted up: there is something sublime about being human. We know noble moments—yes, but there is more than that: our childishness, our company-lovingness, our sheer desire for fun are hallowed by the Divine goodwill....

THIS is the country season. Rare is the “white Christmas”—outside the day-dream, the annual and the Christmas-card!—but lanes, ploughlands and the brown depth of woods will be crisped by frost or mellowed by curdling mists or soothed mildly under our island rain. Not for nothing does our Christmas come at mid-winter: an elemental kindness reaches us from the sleeping earth; something stirs in us as we draw our first waking breath of the

early silent darkness of Christmas morning. The country house is full: everyone has been busy—last night’s late bustle had not long died down before this morning’s early bustle began. This year, to make the party, everybody in it has lent a hand—we have all made ready; now we shall all enjoy. Wood has been chopped and stacked throughout last week; fires will burn prodigally to-day. Everybody has been going without *something*, to build up Christmas—to-day, let us all the more enjoy the illusion of absolute plenty. Let us take it all for granted, like the birds touching-down on the lawn for their Christmas crumbs.

Mist-muffled, gale-blown or glass-clear in frosty blueness, bells from the village church will begin to sound. Outside windows the landscape, etched with bare trees, seems to stretch away in the Christmas-card country; if there be snow, it will be cotton-wool snow dusted with glitter-powder, the bird-prints on it touched in with a blue paint-brush. If the sun shines, the evergreens will be glossy, rimmed with a special light.

INDOORS, the fires, still palely brilliant, purr: the rooms hold a festival climate of their own. Christmas Day has a great ceremonial shape—every hour around the face of the clock is to be important: the clocks know it. In the kitchen, the range is being stoked with saved-up coal for the great roasting. The Christmas dinner, in your house—is it early or late? That is to be decided by the majority age of your Christmas party.

And the present-giving, the parcel-opening, the big surprise event—are you, as a family, of the breakfast-plate school, or do you hold off the presents until Christmas-tree hour? That does, of course, key up enchanting suspense. But, myself, I love the dementing breakfast—the litter of untied ribbon and gaudy wrapping-paper in morning light, the buried toast, the forgotten coffee, the neglected sausage, the ultimate chattering rush for church.

One tradition of Christmas Day in the country is the afternoon walk—it does not matter to *where*. On the return, dusk falls—pause for a moment longer out on the wintry lawn and look in at the rooms you are coming home to. Think, as you watch the firelight through the glass, of the homeless. Sweetness, decency, peace—God gave us strength to preserve them. What we have, we hold in trust on behalf

of a queered and a battered world. Happiness, always sacred, becomes the more so for being rare....

As the evening deepens, the house will seem to be fuller than it is. Most unghostly, most natural at Christmas is the presence amongst us of the distant or the dead. Christmas calls across space and back through time: whether it is our ancestors or the young men who did not come back from wars, we cannot believe that those who loved life before us, who loved this life we love, are not with us now.

ALL Christmases cannot be country Christmases: however, it is a phenomenon of this season that the country comes to town. There is something primitive about the silence of the streets once the last rush of Christmas Eve has subsided. Squares with trees in them become winter mysteries: the suspension of the abstract roar of the city allows us to hear birds. Out from the houses in rows and the flats in blocks comes something vital: each is a core, a home.

Indoors, over Christmas, life inside the town home becomes self-enclosed: there sets in a cosy, cave-like independence—some few neighbouring streets, holiday-somnolent, become one’s whole terrain. In this, there are no strangers: from front-door steps, greetings are called across: for us all, the “local” has decked itself out in holly. The afternoon walk is taken over the grass of parks.

IN hotels, Christmas-trees flowering over with electricity, revolved about gravely by hotel children, bring a lump to the throat. Decidedly it is better to be at home; but restaurants, even, take on a steamy homeliness. To-morrow, the pantomimes will be opening.... All through a Christmas afternoon in London there is an old-fashioned smell in the air—chestnuts roasting, gunpowder from the crackers. Dusk, coming earlier here than in the country, makes windows spring one by one into orange light. Christmas London has, also, its friendly hauntings—the ear might fancy, down Victorian streets, the staid clip-clop of the cab-horse, the more irresponsible jingle of the hansom bringing guests to the Christmas party.

It comes but once a year.

*Pastel by John Bryan for “Great Expectations.” From *Art and Design in the British Film*, compiled by Edward Carrick (Dennis Dobson; 18s.)

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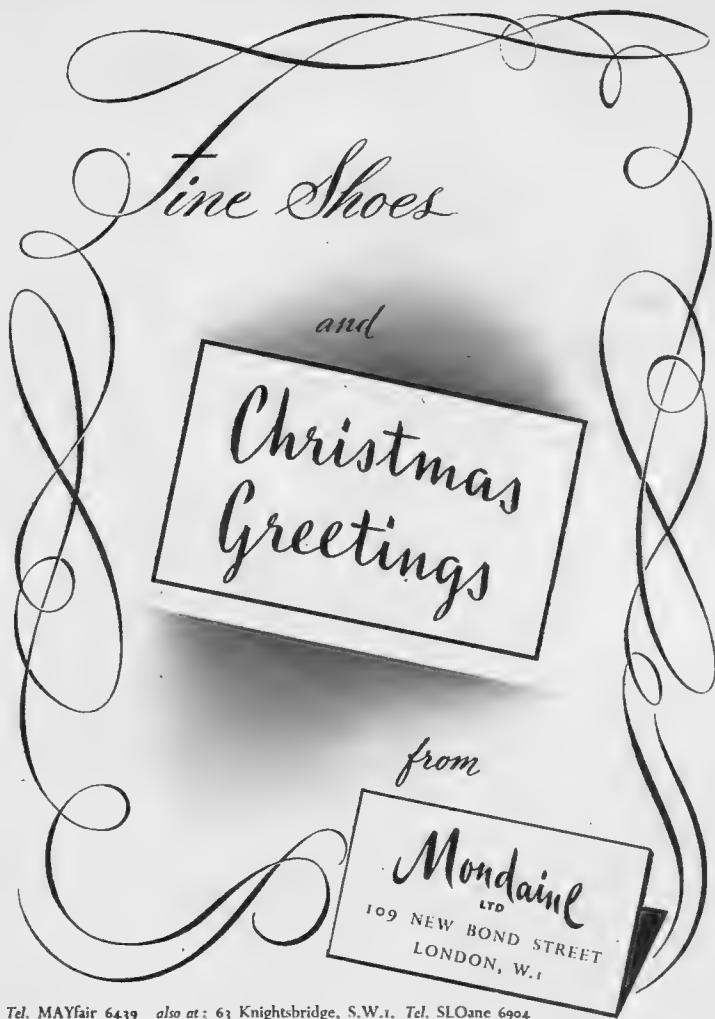


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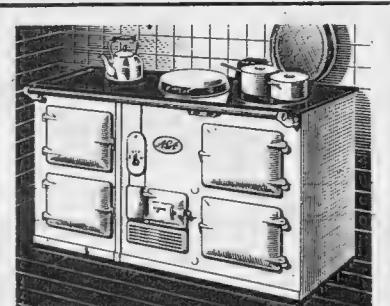
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The "Tatler's" Register of ENGAGEMENTS



Navana Vandyk

Miss Audrey Joan Frances Edwards, elder daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Harold Edwards, of Nomans-lands Farm, St. Albans, Herts, who is to marry Mr. Alec George Foucard, son of Mr. and Mrs. Norman Foucard, of College Road, Whalley Range, Manchester



Miss Patricia Helen Marshall, only daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Harold Marshall, of Queen's Gardens, W.2, who is to marry Mr. John Cameron Norman, only son of the late Capt. G. R. Norman, and of Mrs. R. W. Martin, Whatley House, Beaminster, Dorset



Hay Wrightson

The Hon. June Ponsonby, elder daughter of Lord and Lady de Mauley, of Langford House, Lechlade, Glos, who has become engaged to Mr. Robert Grimston, eldest son of Mr. R. V. Grimston, M.P., and Mrs. Grimston, of Lowndes Court, S.W.1



Miss Penelope Joan Davidson, elder daughter of Capt. A. G. Davidson, R.N. (retd.), and Mrs. Davidson, of Crowsborough, Sussex, who is engaged to Mr. Brian David Dudding, son of Major and Mrs. H. N. Dudding, of Seaview, Isle of Wight



Lady Maureen Isabel le Poer Trench, eldest daughter of the Earl and Countess of Clancarty, of Plumpton, Sussex, who is to marry Mr. C. Colin Cooper, only son of the late Major Colin Cooper and of Mrs. Colin Cooper, of Chelsea Square



Miss Elizabeth Green, daughter of Dr. and Mrs. J. G. Green, of Downview Road, Worthing, Sussex, who has announced her engagement to Mr. John Alexander Couldrey, son of the late Cdr. and Mrs. F. J. Couldrey, of Njoro, Kenya

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Bubble and Squeak

THE famous specialists who had been called into consultation had examined the patient and then retired to another room to discuss diagnosis. The patient was curious and sent his small son to listen at the door. "Could you hear what they said?" he asked eagerly as the boy returned.

"I listened awfully hard, but I couldn't get the big words," replied the boy. "But I did hear one of them say, 'Oh, well, we'll find out at the autopsy.'"

A GUARD from the lunatic asylum rushed up to a farmer on the road and said, "I am looking for an escaped lunatic. Did he pass this way?"

The farmer puffed thoughtfully on his pipe and asked, "What does he look like?"

"He's very short," said the guard, "and he is very thin, and he weighs eighteen stone."

The farmer looked at him in amazement. "How can a man be short and thin and still weigh eighteen stone?" he asked.

"Don't act so surprised," said the guard angrily. "I told you he was crazy."

HE was a good wife, but she would keep giving him hash, all recipes from a French cookery book on using left-overs. One evening one of the odd mixtures appeared in a covered dish on the table.

As the husband raised the cover, the wife said: "Why don't you ask the blessing first, dear?"

Replied the husband, "I don't believe there is anything here that hasn't been blessed already."

THE bookie slowly counted out the pound notes into the old lady's wrinkled hands.

"Lady," he said, "I just don't understand. However did you manage to pick the winner?"

The old lady looked a little bewildered.

"Really," she said, "I don't know myself. I just stuck a pin in the paper and . . . well, there it is."

The bookie took a deep breath.

"That's all very well, lady," he cried. "But how on earth did you manage to pick four winners yesterday?"

"Oh," replied the old lady, "that was easy. You see, I used a fork."

MR. JONES was visibly undone as he staggered into the locker room.

"What's the matter?" asked the pro sympathetically.

"I've just killed my wife, that's what's the matter," said Mr. Jones.

"Good heavens! How did you do that?"

"I was over on the practice tee and didn't see her coming up behind me. I took a back swing and hit her on the head. She dropped dead," groaned Jones, with his head in his hands.

"That's bad," said the pro. "What club were you using?"

"The niblick."

"That's the club," said the pro.

A FIVE-YEAR-OLD boy had been having trouble at the hands of a small schoolfellow. One day, on his return from school, he remarked to his mother: "Johnny isn't nasty to me any more; every time I see him, I hit him to keep him kind."



"Her Ladyship wants to know if they can have a little extra corned beef to-night—seeing it's Christmas . . ."

Graham's Mister Briggs, who for the past year has been entertaining "Tatler" readers, has at last had to give up his job in most harrowing circumstances, which Graham will reveal next week. But it is pleasing to note that before the crash he laid on the Christmas dinner below stairs with typical Briggs efficiency

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Sydney last month, Johannesburg last week . . . New York next week! As my firm's export manager, I find it pays to do business with a man and not just an address. Correspondence is cut to the bone, misunderstandings are prevented, problems are solved on the spot. That's where Speedbird service and B.O.A.C.'s more than 72,000 miles of world-wide routes come in. B.O.A.C. usually flies where I want to go, and Speedbird service gets me or my freight there in a hurry and on schedule. Arranging my trips is easy—I leave everything to my local B.O.A.C. Appointed Agent. About the actual flight—it's good, *really* good. Everything from the prompt, courteous attention to the complementary meals reflects B.O.A.C.'s 29-year-old tradition of Speedbird service and experience.

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P16

MORTON SUNDOUR FABRICS LIMITED, CARLISLE

colds?

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Serocalcin is available in two sizes: The immunising course of 60 tablets costs 7/6 plus 1/9 Purchase Tax. The treatment pack of 20 tablets costs 3/- plus 9d. Purchase Tax.

All who suffer from colds are invited to send to Harwoods Laboratories Ltd., Watford, for descriptive booklet "Immunity from Colds."

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Regd.
FOR THE PREVENTION AND TREATMENT OF COLDS



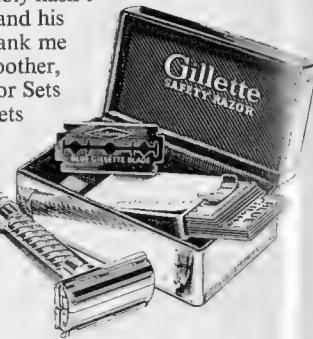
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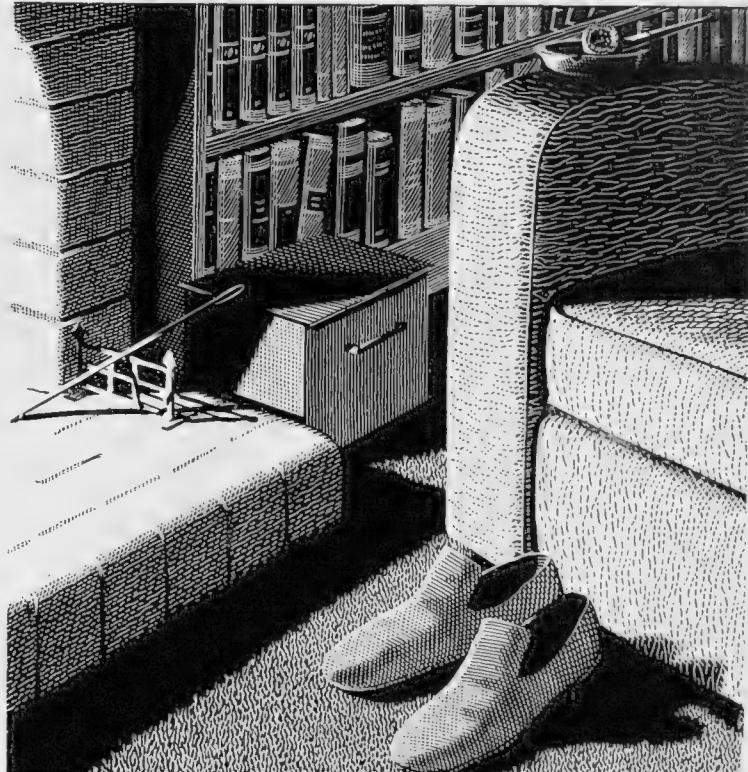
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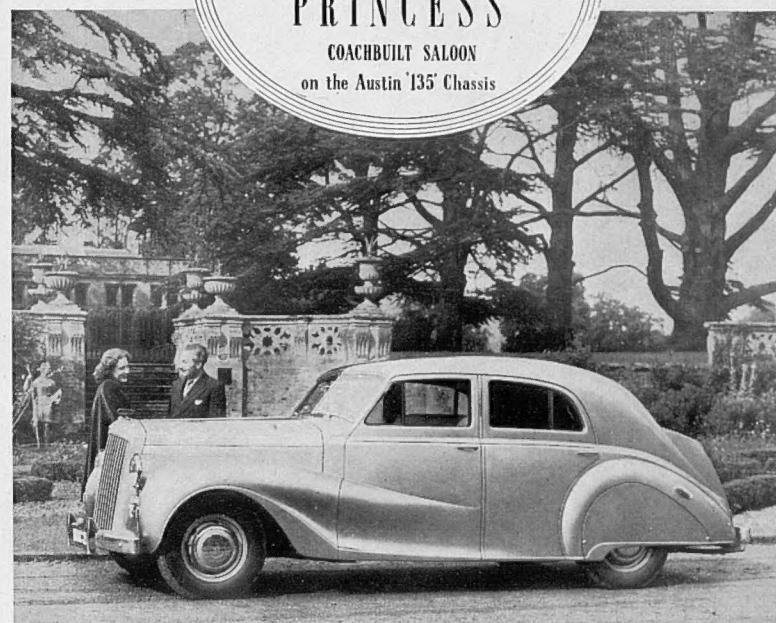
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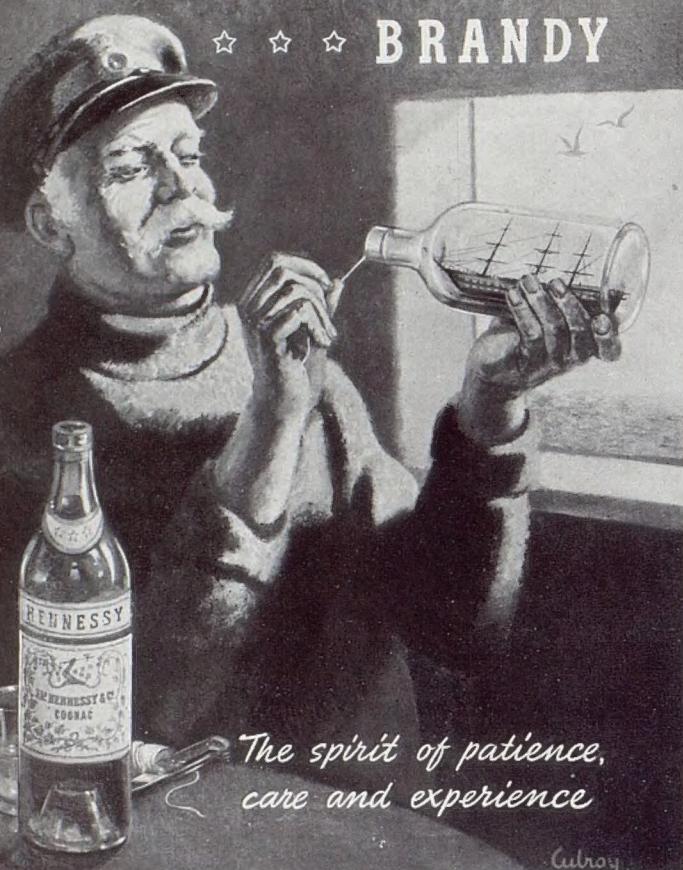
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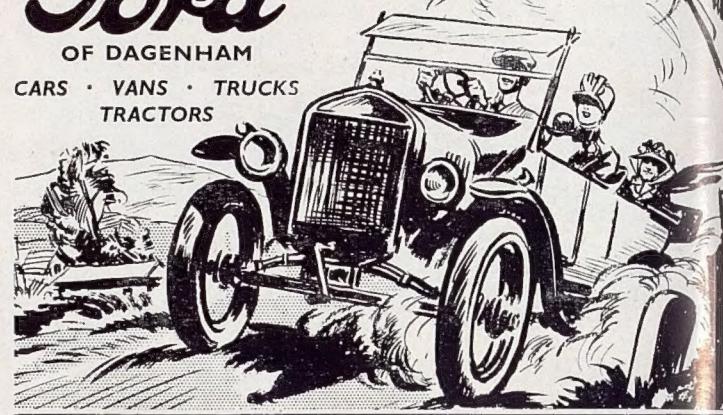
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